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ABSTRACT

This study of international students at eight Canadian universities used a case study approach. The study's objectives were to provide universities with information that would enable them to improve their interactions with international students, to identify the factors that influence universities to accept international students, and to identify the public policy implications of international student recruitment. Interviews were conducted with "front line" staff in international student services, senior administrators, and policymakers. Views of international students were incorporated using studies carried out by individual universities to collect student opinions and concerns. Findings are reported in terms of recruitment and admission practices at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, language competence, and university's capacity to accept international students. A chart presents three levels of recommended practices concerning: institutional policy, general approach to recruitment, promotional materials, general approach to admissions, admissions processing and response time, admissions materials, approach to tuition fees and funding, on-site arrival, international student services, housing, international student consultation, and overall approach. Implications for public policy and areas for further action are also identified. Appendices provide enrollment data, provincial policy differences, recommendations, and an institutional self-evaluation template. (Contains 9 references.) (DB)

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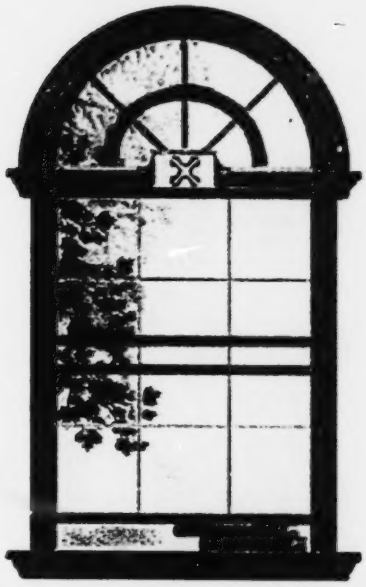
A Warm Welcome?

Recruitment and Admission of International Students to Canadian Universities: Policies, Procedures and Capacity

November 1998



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Acknowledgments

The goal of recruiting more international students to Canadian universities is an increasingly important element in the internationalization strategies of many institutions. While the external environment will always be a key factor affecting universities' efforts in this regard, institutions also recognize that there are significant challenges to achieving this goal posed by their own policies and procedures when it comes to the recruitment and admission of international students and are taking steps to improve them. This study represents a first attempt to document these considerable changes taking place on Canadian campuses and to identify the many good practices being developed and implemented.

The report reflects the collective effort of a number of people. First, the AUCC expresses its thanks to the eight case study institutions whose staff took the time to participate in interviews and to provide documentation on the particular international student recruitment and admission policies and procedures in place at their institutions.

Second, AUCC is grateful to Dr Fraser Taylor, who designed the research methodology, served as the lead researcher and prepared the report. The study has, without a doubt, benefited from his wealth of experience and his enthusiasm. AUCC also thanks the other members of the project steering committee, Peter Ricketts, President of the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS), and Ann Montgomery, former President of the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC), for serving as case-study researchers and for bringing their valuable perspective and insights to the final report and the project overall.

The AUCC's International Relations Division staff also made significant contributions. Larry Peck oversaw the project's initial stages, with Pari Johnston coordinating final editing and production of the report. David Strawczynski undertook the research on the provincial policies affecting international students in Canada found in Appendix 3, while Darlene Gibbs prepared the final lay-out of the report.

It is our hope that this combined effort to shine a light on good practices in the Canadian university community will encourage all institutions to examine their own policies and procedures, a step that will help Canadian universities meet their goal of significantly increasing the presence of international students on their campuses while ensuring these students have the best experience possible.

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November 1998

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1. Context of the study

As a result of demographic changes in Canada that have led to increased competition for qualified Canadian students, the recruitment and admission of a greater number of international students has become a growing priority for many Canadian universities.

In 1997, there were 32,905 full- and part-time international students in Canada (of whom 41% were graduate students), representing approximately 4% of total university enrolment. This represents an overall increase in the number of international students since 1996 (see Appendix 1). Preliminary figures for 1998 indicate a further rise in enrolment.

Although this is an encouraging sign, Canadian universities are not yet major players in terms of attracting international students to their campuses. Canada's many competitors in the international marketplace are perceived to be more aggressive and successful. Australia, for example, had 64,188 international students enrolled in university education in 1997 (Doorbar 1998). Despite Canada's good reputation, few Asian students consider Canada as an option (Lawrence et al. 1997). Canada is not a major recruiter and needs to raise its profile. The same demographic trends being experienced in Canada are also found in other industrial countries such as France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Institutions in each of these nations are also adopting aggressive international student recruitment strategies.

The situation is further complicated by the more recent introduction of "virtual universities" and distance-education courses, which are not constrained by national borders, and steps being taken by many universities worldwide to establish campuses overseas or to enter into cooperative or "twinning" agreements with indigenous institutions. Overall, these new approaches to delivering Canadian university programs are challenging the traditional model that brings students directly to the Canadian university campus.

The international student component has always been important to the intellectual health of the Canadian university system. This continues to be the case, especially at the graduate level, where it has been argued that international students are necessary to enhance the quality of programs and create the critical mass required to sustain some graduate programs, particularly in science and engineering.

However, Canadian universities have been relatively slow to respond to the international marketplace partially because the incentives to do so have not been great. Until relatively recently, the demand from Canadians for student places in most provinces has exceeded the supply, especially in high-interest programs such as computer science and business. This has been further complicated by the fee policies in some provinces, which do not make it fiscally attractive to recruit foreign students unless tuition fees come close to full cost recovery. Cuts to university operating budgets and federal cuts to other areas, such as scholarship programs and granting council funding, have also had an impact, especially on the resources available to support international students at both the graduate and undergraduate level through financial assistance and other types of services.

Canadian universities that have begun to recruit international students, therefore, face several challenges. Given the constrained fiscal situation, international recruitment efforts have often been concentrated on countries where two conditions apply: the demand for university education exceeds supply; and there is a significant group of students who can afford to pay the costs of Canadian education either from their own family resources or through scholarship programs supported by their own government or by international agencies. Another challenge is the division of responsibility between the federal and provincial governments for matters affecting international student recruitment. Education is a provincial responsibility, but immigration, foreign affairs and international trade are primarily federal responsibilities. Provincial and federal policies affecting international student recruitment and admission should complement each other, but this is not always the case and can vary considerably from province to province.

Perhaps the most important challenge is that Canada's immigration procedures and policies have been adversely affecting the ability of universities to recruit students, especially those from the Pacific Rim. The government responded to the concerns of universities by establishing a consultative mechanism led by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to address many of the issues. The results have led to changes in CIC's procedures and, although all problems have not been resolved, there have been significant improvements and a good communication channel has been established for ongoing discussion.

Just as the universities have been critical of government policies affecting the recruitment of international students, however, government officials have repeatedly drawn attention to the fact that university recruitment and admission policies and procedures for international students need to be examined. The prime minister himself highlighted this issue in his March 1997 speech to the executive heads of Canadian universities. The Canadian Education Centre (CEC) Network has also reported what it hears from international students on the barriers they face in dealing with universities (see Appendix 2).

This research project reported here grew out these concerns and represents a first attempt by the university community to take a comprehensive look at its own international student recruitment and admission practices. Its major goal is to provide a benchmark against which Canadian universities can measure their performance in the recruitment and admission of international students and make adjustments as necessary. The project was a joint effort between the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies (CAGS) and the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC), working with Dr Fraser Taylor, professor of geography and international affairs at Carleton University, who served as the lead researcher and prepared the report. In addition to the contribution of the three key organizations, the research study received financial support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

2. The research study

2.1. Objectives

The study had three objectives:

- To provide universities with useful information for assessing and, where necessary, improving their interactions with international students within their own institutional contexts, from the time the student first comes into contact with the institution until she or he arrives on campus.
- To identify the factors that influence the capacity of universities to accept international students to facilitate institutional decision-making.
- To identify any implications for public policy with respect to international student recruitment.

2.2. Methods

A case-study approach was used to collect information, and eight universities were chosen for study. They are representative of different regions and sizes of institutions, ranging from comprehensive universities with fully developed graduate programs to smaller institutions with a more limited range of programs. For reasons of confidentiality, none of the case-study universities is identified by name.

A series of questions was developed, not as a formal questionnaire but as guidelines for the key issues believed to be relevant to each research objective. In-depth, one-to-one interviews were conducted with individuals identified by each university. These people ranged from those working on the "front-line" in international student service and admissions offices to senior administrators and policymakers. Each interviewee was guaranteed confidentiality and no individual is identified with any of the views expressed in the research report. The questions were circulated and each university provided extensive documentation in advance of the visits that were undertaken by representatives from AUCC, CAGS, ARUCC, and Dr Taylor between May and July 1998. Additional information from other universities was used to supplement the case-study material on selected issues.

The views of international students were incorporated by using a series of studies carried out by individual universities to collect student opinions and concerns. Given the significant differences in the nature and importance of policies, procedures and capacities at the undergraduate and graduate levels, these areas were considered separately.

2.3. Limitations of the study

The study is a first attempt to describe a rapidly changing situation and, as the sample is a fairly small one, it does not capture the full range of emerging practices in Canadian institutions. It should also be noted that the interviews were carried out by a number of people, which introduces a certain element of subjectivity into the information-gathering process.

We also recognize that the nature of the Canadian educational system means that the intensity of specific challenges varies from province to province and from institution to institution within each province. The most obvious example of variation by province is the regulation or

deregulation of fees for international students. Appendix 3 indicates the range of current provincial policies in this area that clearly have varying effects on the admission and recruitment of international students.

Although neither time nor budget for this study allowed for a direct survey of international students, their views have been captured from several other sources, including international student surveys conducted by the CEC Network, several Canadian universities and independent researchers.

However, despite these limitations, the analysis of the eight case studies reveals a significant number of common challenges and a considerable array of good practices that will be very useful to other institutions looking to make adjustments in their recruitment and admission of international students.

3. Recruitment and admission practices

3.1. The undergraduate level

For all eight case-study universities, the first of our three research objectives was clearly the most important, and great interest was expressed in learning how different universities were dealing with common problems and challenges. Recruitment and admission procedures in Canada's universities have been set up to meet the needs of Canadian students and satisfy the institution's perceptions of the most effective and cost-efficient way of dealing with Canadian admissions. These rarely meet the needs of international students, and they can be quite alienating. The study revealed an awareness of this on the part of all case-study institutions.

The response to the need for change has been very positive, although this varies considerably from institution to institution. A major constraint continues to be the availability of resources, both human and fiscal, to make the kinds of changes required. One of the case-study institutions indicated that the recruitment priority of the university had to be domestic students because of their enrolment situation in relation to the provincial funding formula and the general fiscal condition of the university. Until enrolment levels had increased, the university administration could not see how they could invest more money in international recruitment while cutting operating budgets across the board. However, this was the exception; the other seven institutions had made significant changes in both their polices and procedures. Additional information from non-case-study institutions indicates that this trend seems to be prevalent across the country.

A thematic approach is used to consider recruitment and admission procedures, with examples from individual case studies.

3.1.1. Strategy, infrastructure and finance

The starting point for the recruitment and admission of international students is a coherent strategy, together with the necessary infrastructure and the financing and human resources required to support it. All case-study institutions are interested in the recruitment and admission of international students, but their approaches vary from carefully planned institutional policies,

strategies and goals for recruiting and admitting students to situations where no special institutional level efforts are being made.

At one case-study institution, the Board of Governors decided that a special initiative was required to increase enrolment of international students with substantially increased tuition fees. The strategic aim is to increase international student enrolment in each designated program without the displacement of domestic students, and the recruitment of international students was designed to support the internationalization of the university by building a stable intake of international students. Not all programs in the institution are involved in the special program. Faculty and staff from across the campus work with a coordinator appointed to run the program to develop and implement a strategy that includes specific enrolment targets. In selected programs, the target is to increase international student enrolment to 15% over the next five to ten years. Tuition fees go into a Special Purpose Fund. A revenue-sharing formula allocates a substantial share of this fund to support the costs of the special initiative, including the recruitment costs as well as the additional costs required to improve the admissions procedures and related services for international students.

The Board of Governors recognized that the recruitment and admission of a significant number of international undergraduate students — which is targeted to triple by 2001 — could not be achieved without a substantial capital investment in advance of the receipt of tuition revenues. Thus, it extended a loan of $1 million to the program to finance its activities. A strategic business plan was created and the availability of financial resources provided encouragement to both academic and administrative units to, literally and figuratively, "buy in" to the program.

In this model, the funds required to finance the initiative are being recovered from future tuition revenues, but monies are available up front to allow the initiative to proceed. Additional resources are available to all major players as a result of the program and the strategic benefits of its close integration with the overall internationalization strategy of the university. The tuition fees, in this instance, are around $13,800 and the success of the program is predicated on the enrolment targets being met.

This strategy faces a number of challenges. International students often apply for and receive landed-immigrant status during the program, thus altering both the board's financial projections and its stricture regarding the displacement of domestic students. There is also the issue of access for international students who cannot afford the new high fees. Although some monies from the initiative are applied to scholarships and financial assistance, this is far from adequate to meet the needs of international students from poorer backgrounds. However, the strategy is clear, concise and well thought out, and the initial targets for enrolment are being met.

A second case-study institution also links the recruitment and admission of international students to its clearly articulated internationalization strategy. The target is to increase the international student component of the university to 10% of total student enrolment. The university found the necessary funds to appoint an international marketing and recruitment officer with responsibility for developing and implementing infrastructure for international marketing, a strategic marketing plan and a strategic recruitment plan.

A careful analysis of the existing and potential market for international students was carried out. In this instance, the required financial resources have come from existing university sources, but there is clearly an expectation that these will be recovered over time. General tuition costs have not been raised to full cost recovery for all international students, but the university has initiated an ambitious twinning scheme with a Malaysian institution with tuition fees in the region of $14,000. The university has also signed a letter of intent to open a campus in Malaysia. A revenue-sharing formula gives 80% of the tuition revenue to the faculties involved and 20% to the university. This will allow faculties to provide the additional resources required to service the new program, especially in high-demand areas such as engineering. Such programs can be important revenue generators, as the Australian experience has shown, but their success in this respect will be affected by the current financial crises on the Pacific Rim, and they are not without problems. The strategy of opening a campus in another country and taking programs to the students rather than the students to the programs is an interesting and innovative one.

A third case-study institution has also linked the recruitment and admission of international students to its internationalization strategy, but has taken a different approach. The university is making a concerted effort to recruit and admit international students, and there is widespread support for an increase in their numbers on campus. The principal reason is the recognition that international students make a very important contribution to the quality of learning and are a valuable asset in academic terms. An enrolment management committee, chaired by the dean of graduate studies, has developed a three-year strategy for international student recruitment at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The strategy has specific targets, which are valuable in gauging the success of the recruitment effort. The strategy has both geographic and program dimensions; target countries are those where there are significant concentrations of university alumni as well as where perceived new opportunities exist. Analyzing where students have come from in the past is an important aspect of any recruitment strategy.

The university has identified specific programs for international recruitment based on its recognized academic strengths and its perceived comparative advantage in terms of demand. In an increasingly competitive situation, it believes that there is real value in playing on its strengths. A strategically focused approach both in terms of targeted programs and target countries based on a combination of countries with a tradition of sending students to the university and emerging new market areas is both innovative and effective.

This strategy is similar to those being pursued by other case-study institutions, but differs significantly in the approach taken to student fees. A scholarship fund has been established for international students and fees for international students have been lowered. Fees for BA and BSc programs will drop from $10,280 to $9,500 in 1998/99 and $8,000 in 1999/2000. The fees for the BSc in engineering and BLA (landscape architecture) will fall from $16,800 to $11,500 over the same period.

This approach is possible because of the financial circumstances at this university. Its enrolment exceeds its "corridor" and the existing number of international students is low. Doubling their number is, therefore, fiscally as well as academically attractive to the university, as the marginal cost of accepting these additional students is more than covered by their tuition fees. Although the committee worked closely with the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis, financial

considerations were secondary to the academic value of increasing the number of foreign students on campus. The university has found funding from existing resources to establish a new position of international recruitment officer.

International student recruitment and admission are best carried out in an environment of genuine commitment to internationalization, and this is certainly the case at the three universities discussed above. At a fourth, it is one of the key strategic directions for the institution, which is committed to "outreach to regional, national and international communities." A strength of this university's approach is the way that regional outreach has been specifically linked to international outreach. International activities were facilitated by an outside grant of $400,000 over a three-year period, which allowed the development of a good infrastructure, including excellent human resources as well as strong links with the local business community, the major focus of the initial grant. This platform is being used as the base for a major emphasis on international student recruitment, and this link between the international activities of the university and international student recruitment is an important one. A strategic synergy among different aspects of a university's international work has advantages over approaches where recruitment and admission of international students are seen as more isolated activities.

As a small institution with limited resources, this university cannot afford the financial investments in marketing that are being made by larger institutions, but it supports partnership and network approaches, such as that provided by the CEC network. The university chose a broad approach in terms of overall recruitment efforts, but emphasizes selected countries by using recruitment agents. The university uses a portion of the supplemental fees charged to international students to meet its recruitment costs.

One case-study institution is highly decentralized in terms of its general administration and decision-making structures; each faculty tends to work in an independent manner. In this situation, the university does not have an overall internationalization policy or a strategic approach to the recruitment and admission of international students, and coordination of initiatives relating to international student recruitment and admission is not easy. Like most other academic institutions, the university is trying to differentiate itself from others and focus on its market niche in an increasingly competitive situation. Opinions on the importance of recruiting international students at the undergraduate level vary, and it is not clear how great a priority this is for the university. Because different faculties and departments within faculties have different views on the importance of recruiting international students, it is difficult to talk about an overall strategy. The university has a strong international tradition and a substantial number of international students. Although no faculty is discouraging international students, some attach much greater importance to them than others do.

Decentralized systems have both strengths and weaknesses in terms of the recruitment and admission of international students. In this case-study institution, a number of special programs have been created in science, engineering, medicine, dentistry and pharmacy, apparently to generate income. Fee levels in these special programs vary from $15,000 a year in pre-med science to $34,000 a year in medicine. A combination of regulatory factors has affected the number of Canadians accepted to some of these programs, such as medicine and dentistry, creating surplus capacity. The university filled this gap by recruiting international students.

Students in these programs receive special attention from the faculty, which controls the recruitment and admission process, and each program has its own independent coordinator. The bulk of the income generated goes directly to the faculty, thus offsetting some of the costs of the programs. The marginal costs are more than met by the tuition income, and they are seen as a lucrative source of income, which is especially welcome in times of fiscal constraint.

Decentralized approaches, where all recruitment, admissions, the programs themselves and most of the benefits are controlled at the faculty level, can be focused, highly specific and self-contained. Another advantage is the flexibility and freedom they give to the academic units concerned. Although the Asian currency crisis has adversely affected this institution's special programs, many of which involve Malaysia, some faculties have been able to move swiftly into new markets such as the Middle East and develop special arrangements independent of the restrictions and delays that sometimes mark centralized systems. The major disadvantages of such systems include the lack of institutional synergy and economies of scale. As one interviewee commented, the benefits accrue to the faculty but the costs often accrue to the university especially where central university services are required.

A major issue for high-cost programs is accessibility. Access is based on the ability to pay and this can be in conflict with an institution's international development objectives. This tension appears in a number of case-study institutions. If good value in terms of academic and overall experience is being given and the fees are both nationally and internationally competitive, it can be argued that a market-driven approach, which has been adopted by many of Canada's competitors such as Australia, makes a great deal of sense. Some of the excesses of this approach can be tempered by the development of a "code of ethical practice," such as that of the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee (AVCC 1998). It has also been argued that funds generated by high-cost programs can be used to create scholarship funds for less-advantaged international students.

The counter-argument to this position is that international students should not be used as generators of income to make up for underfunding of the Canadian university system and that high fees invariably decrease diversity in the institution by eliminating poorer international students. The scholarship funds are rarely made available in practice and, even when they are, they are rarely adequate. Until the first half of the 1990s, internationalization in Canadian universities has been dominated by an international development approach supported by substantial funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The case-study evidence suggests that this is changing, and international student recruitment is being driven by a different approach. These two approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but there is a tension between them which remains to be resolved.

In one case-study institution, this has been explicitly addressed in a new internationalization strategy that recognizes the linkages between different aspects of the internationalization process. This comprehensive plan is centred on specific targets for the internationalization of the curriculum, including a basic element for all undergraduates regardless of discipline and a stronger "international profile" for 10% of students that encompasses study abroad, participation in international development projects, registration in international programs and participation in the welcoming of foreign students. The value of international students to the university is

explicitly recognized. International students currently make up about 5% of total enrolment; the plan envisages an increase to 10% over the next few years.

The inclusion of international student recruitment as an integral part of a comprehensive plan for internationalization with specific objectives and targets and with full institutional support is an example of good practice. In none of the other case-study institutions was this integration so well or so clearly defined. At this one, there is a focus and clear purpose to the recruitment of international students related to its academic goals.

The faculty are seen as the key actors in the recruitment of international students. The institution is emphasizing francophone countries, Eastern Europe and Latin America and programs that meet specific needs in target countries or academic programs with surplus capacity. Specific reference is made to institutional linkages and exchanges as fruitful target areas for recruitment at all levels.

The proposed strategy is relatively new, and a challenge will be to find the resources to implement it effectively. The recruitment of international students brings no fiscal benefit to institutions in the province concerned and the strategy takes this into account. Differential fees do not accrue to the universities. Fee deregulation was proposed by the Ministry of Education, but this has been put on hold. Although the strategy does not depend on significant new resources, there are resource implications.

One case-study institution has decided to focus recruitment on domestic students because of severe financial constraints. At present, it sees increasing the enrolment of domestic students as vital to its financial survival, and no additional resources are available to recruit international students. According to the senior administration, this situation was created by two factors: a severe and unplanned decrease in enrolment and a provincial decision to deregulate international student fees and to provide no funding to universities for international student enrolment.

Another case-study institution has a strategy for international student recruitment, but has been unable to implement it fully because of resource constraints. This university has adopted a targeted approach and is using agents to recruit students in selected countries, which is seen as a "no-cost" strategy.

Recruitment should be closely linked with retention, but this is rarely explicitly recognized. One exception is in the approach of one institution that was not one of the case studies. In this case, university resources were made available to support both the recruitment and admission process *and* the retention of students. This institution also chose to centralize international activities and to recognize their interconnected nature.

3.1.2. Administrative structures

Existing administrative structures to deal with the recruitment and admission of students to Canadian universities have been set up with the needs of Canadian students in mind. These are not always the most appropriate structures to deal with the needs of international students and the case studies revealed that a number of adjustments to existing structures and the creation of new structures are necessary to facilitate the process.

A number of institutions have established a "one-stop shopping" approach by creating an office dedicated to the recruitment and admission of international students. From the students' perspective, this means that they have only one location and often only one individual to deal with. One case-study institution established a separate administrative structure to deal with the recruitment and admission of international students with two new staff positions, including a full-time coordinator, thus creating one focal point to coordinate all activities, with financial resources to support their efforts. A new position was also created in the admissions office in addition to that of a records clerk devoted to international student admissions.

Several other case-study institutions as well as other universities follow the "one-stop shopping" model to a greater or lesser degree depending upon the availability of resources. Several have created a new position to deal with international student recruitment. In some instances, this has involved the redistribution of existing staff rather than the creation of new positions.

The "one-stop shopping" approach did not involve a new administrative unit taking on all of the functions of recruitment and admission, although there were several examples of a new unit for international recruitment. The administrative links between recruitment, admissions and registration are important, and the establishment of a new recruitment structure, in addition to existing administrative structures, must be handled with care. In most institutions, existing administrative units are under considerable pressure as a result of lack of resources. If additional demands are made on them to handle international student files, which tend to require more work than Canadian students' files, without the provision of additional resources, then bottlenecks, and delays may occur. This was the case at several institutions.

The situation can be compounded by "territorial" disputes between different administrative units. A new structure that appears to take on some of the functions of an existing administrative structure can be seen as a threat and be met with resistance, which may be both active and passive. Who does things is sometimes as important as what gets done in administrative terms.

There is ample evidence of these problems in case-study institutions and considerable tension, in some instances, between the officers responsible for international student recruitment and others, especially admission officers. In several instances, new resources had been supplied for recruitment of international students without concomitant resources for the admission process. In some instances, increased recruitment efforts have increased demands on admissions offices, leading to tension, misunderstanding and frustration. In some cases, hundreds of international student files have to be dealt with by one overworked admissions officer.

Case-study institutions are aware of these challenges, which exist to a greater or lesser degree in all institutions regardless of size, and a number of interesting approaches are being taken to alleviate the problems and to build the team approach so necessary for success. In one institution, the registrar is attempting to replace the existing separate administrative "boxes" for recruitment, admission and registration with by a series of overlapping "circles." In another, the international initiative provided resources to hard-pressed administrative units to allow them to hire extra staff. This resulted in a win–win situation and considerable enthusiasm. In yet another institution, regular meetings of a "committee without a chair" of the key administrative players at the working level have been established; the decision to have a rotating chair was made to reduce

"territorial" tensions. On the other hand, in one case-study institution, there are no fewer than five separate administrative units involved in international student recruitment with no effective structure to reduce or prevent duplication of efforts.

A special challenge involves coordination of international student recruitment with existing domestic student recruitment. In some case-study institutions, domestic recruitment structures are being used to attract students from the United States; in others, this is seen as part of the international initiative. In decentralized institutions, international student recruitment takes place at the level of individual faculties and even individual academic units. In all case-study institutions with schools of business, these units have their own recruitment initiatives for international students which are sometimes at variance with the approach of the university. Finally, in some case-study institutions, the international liaison officer (ILO) is a central figure in recruitment and admissions initiatives. In others, the ILO plays little if any part in the process.

Administrative coordination is important in the recruitment and admissions process and a team approach helps bring this about. None of the case-study institutions has achieved the necessary coordination, but considerable progress is being made in several institutions. Two key factors emerged as important in this respect: incentives for people to participate in new initiatives either in the form of new resources for their units or recognition of their efforts; and the personalities of those involved in promoting the recruitment and admission of international students. Where the people are cooperative and team-oriented in nature, greater success is achieved; where people are more confrontational in nature, less progress is being made.

3.1.3. Recruitment issues

The case-study institutions are using a variety of recruitment strategies and methods, which vary in nature and design depending on the degree of commitment to international student recruitment. Regardless of the approach, it is important to measure its effectiveness and this is being done in only a few cases. Where resources are scarce, it is important to assess the costs and benefits of recruitment methods, preferably with hard data. For example, most of the case-study institutions attend educational fairs, but few are able to assess the impact of this activity in terms of the number of people actually recruited. One institution reported a marked increase in enquiries after such a fair, but this was not accompanied by an increase in applications for admission. A number of institutions are developing tracking systems by encoding information material as well as application forms. They are also tracking and analyzing hits on their web sites.

One good practice that is emerging as Canadian universities become involved in recruiting international students is their adoption of business-like practices including the development of business and marketing plans with specific quantifiable targets. As most institutions use a variety of recruitment efforts, it is often difficult to assess the impact of any one technique. There can also be a significant time lag between investment in a particular approach and concrete results. For example, people attending an educational fair may well be planning ahead and may not apply for one or more years after the event. Comparative research (Doorbar 1998) has shown that students begin their planning for university several years before graduating from high school.

Institutions that have made a major investment in the recruitment of international students have, invariably, made a comprehensive and careful analysis of existing and potential markets. In one instance, this involved the identification of three tiers of target countries with different strategies for each tier. In addition to geographic analyses, these institutions used a program-specific approach. Other case-study institutions rarely carry out analyses and planning of this type, but tend to supplement existing recruitment practices for Canadian students by adding components aimed at international students. All case-study institutions have joined one or more of the CECs. One very important source of market intelligence is the current international student body. Determining where and how the students heard about the university is a good practice that is being followed by some, but by no means all, of the case-study institutions. Another good practice is the systematic monitoring of the performance and retention of international students and gathering of related statistics to use for marketing purposes.

The promotional material used in recruiting varies from a simple brochure for international students to sophisticated multi-media approaches. All institutions have developed web pages, but the quality of content and presentation varies considerably. The best practice involved the development of a specific web page for international students, designed to be user-friendly and informative. The better pages include information specific to the country from which an interested student comes. The best examples include:

- Clear country-specific admission requirements expressed in local terms, specific financial information in terms of fees and financial support available by program;
- Contact information for international students including dedicated telephone and fax numbers;
- The names and e-mail addresses of staff members especially trained to deal with enquiries from specific countries;
- The times that people will be available to respond by telephone, if required, taking into account time zone changes.

The best web sites also include downloadable application forms with direct links to the web page of the nearest Canadian embassy, consulate and CEC where this is available. For countries where a web page for these has not been created, specific contact information is provided.

The web and e-mail are important for both promotion and admissions and, although not yet available to all students, are increasingly important sources of information for potential students. However, comparative research suggests caution and the need for a diversity of information channels used, as fewer than 10% of Asian applicants report having Internet access (Doorbar 1998). In spite of this, the investment of time and effort to produce well-designed, easily accessible and informative web pages specifically for international students is well spent. It is also important to keep web pages up to date. Few of the web pages of the case-study institutions have all the characteristics outlined above. Too many university web pages are designed only for Canadian applicants and the information required by international students is often very difficult to find.

All of the case-study institutions are producing printed promotional material. The best examples are material that has been specifically designed for particular countries. One case-study

institution has designed an innovative brochure specifically for the U.S. market, which won two awards: a gold medal from the U.S. Council for the Advancement and Support of Education and a silver medal from the Canadian Council for Advancement of Education. The judges liked the graphic design but, more important, the appropriateness and quality of the content for the target audience and the strong results from the mail-out campaign. Copies of the brochure were mailed directly to students in central and northeast United States who had written preliminary SATs. The university concerned had purchased a listing of the names and addresses. Approximately 50,000 brochures were sent out and over 10,000 requests for information were received, although it is too early to tell how many of the enquiries will result in firm applications. The brochure has been featured in a number of national newspapers.

Another case-study institution is developing promotional material specifically tailored to individual countries in the local language as well as English. Quebec-based institutions have developed excellent promotional materials for both France and other nations in "*la Francophonie*."

Promotional material must be culturally sensitive if it is to be effective. This applies to web pages, but even more so to videos and published material. The use of materials designed for Canada or the United States without modification can be counterproductive. The best practices are where students, staff and faculty from the region, or those who are familiar with it, have been consulted on the design and content of promotional material. This has occurred in one or two of the case-study institutions.

In many cultures, for example in Asia and Latin America, parents have a major role in the choice of the institution their son or daughter will attend, and promotional material should be designed for parents as much as for the students. Pictures of the campus are often more appropriate than abstract graphic images. In choosing illustrative material, care must be taken to ensure that cultural mistakes are not made inadvertently. For example, some case-study institutions have an excellent recruitment video featuring their "foot patrol" which is available to escort female students on request. Although this valuable service may be attractive to North American students, the message it sends to Asian parents is that the campus is unsafe and certainly not a place they would choose to send their daughters.

Most students contemplating coming to Canada for study will be able to read material in English or in French, but their parents may not. Even a simple one- or two-page document in the local language containing the required information specific to the country concerned is of value; several case-study institutions are producing such material. However, great care must be taken to ensure that the translation is accurate. One Canadian university president found himself in Asia with business cards in the local language and promotional material on the university describing him as a woman, which was a source of both amusement and confusion to those he met.

All case-study institutions are involved in general recruitment and marketing, but several have chosen to supplement this with a highly targeted approach. Some are considering replacing their general recruitment practices with more specific approaches. General recruitment strategies can be expensive, especially if application fees are not used to support the admission process. One case-study institution's general strategy resulted in 6,000 enquiries and 1,400 applications, but

only 150 actual arrivals. The expense involved in answering the 6,000 enquiries and processing the 1,400 applications was considerable. General strategies may also result in applications for programs with limited capacity, resulting in few actual admissions.

The use of agents to recruit students is being considered by several Canadian universities and one case-study institution has found this method to be very effective. In the words of one interviewee, "No agents, no students!" In this case, agents are being used in Brazil, India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Agents are selected with great care and, in the case of India, with the assistance of faculty members of Indian origin. Funding is on a commission basis, which varies from 10–18% of the tuition of English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students for every semester registered to a flat-rate commission for each student recruited to an academic program. The university concerned uses a portion of the supplemental fees charged to international students to meet these costs. The agents have agreed not to charge the students a placement fee.

Some case-study institutions are opposed to the use of agents, but the experience described above has so far been very positive. In some societies, such as in the UAE, it is difficult to do business without an agent. An agent in the UAE is seen as the representative of the university and the status and social standing of the agent is of great importance. The key seems to lie in the careful selection of an agent, regardless of which country is involved. The selection of an inadequate agent can lead to a negative result for both the students and the university, but a good agent can be a major asset in recruiting students.

The university can specify the qualifications required of potential students and for each discipline. A good agent will meet with students and their parents, answer their questions about the campus in their own language, collect all the required documentation and present this to the university. In the case-study institution described above, the working relationship between the institution and the agent included visits by the agent to the campus and the development of personal ties and trust.

A targeted approach using a carefully selected agent can lead to positive results for a minimal financial investment. Some of the best agents can be alumni of the university who are living in their home countries. The best practice results where the university absorbs the agents' costs, rather than allowing them to charge the student a fee for their services, which is the case in at least one other case-study institution and can lead to abuse. Comparative research shows extensive use of agents by Australian institutions, although one agent may represent many Australian and other universities (Doorbar 1998).

A number of case-study institutions have targeted the United States as a market. Given the value of the Canadian dollar, competitive fee structures and the high quality of Canadian education, Canadian universities present a comparative advantage for U.S. students. There is an imbalance in the exchange of students between the two countries: 3,000–4,000 U.S. students are studying in Canada compared with over 20,000 Canadians studying in the United States. One Canadian institution right on the border had fewer than 15 U.S. citizens among its 12,000 students in 1997 and has chosen to set its fees at $3,500 (U.S.) for Americans to try to attract more students. Several case-study institutions reported that some years ago they had many more U.S. students than at present and would like to recapture the market.

Three of the case-study institutions are involved in co-marketing recruitment activities in the United States. For example, one has joined two other institutions to market an "ivy league" experience in the northeastern United States and another has worked with neighbouring universities on educational tours.

A number of institutions in Nova Scotia are participating in the International Trade and Marketing Plan for Nova Scotia Higher Education. This three-year plan was initiated by the provincial government beginning with a $2.1-million investment, 60% of which was from the federally funded Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and 40% from the province. There are five project components:

- Collaborative higher educational missions,
- Collaborative student recruitment brochures,
- A resource directory of academic training and research expertise,
- A collaborative incentives fund,
- A learning leisure program.

The program is managed by the marketing coordinator of the Nova Scotia Higher Education Advisory Committee on International Trade and Marketing, which is co-chaired by the provincial government and the Nova Scotia university consortium. The concept of support for co-marketing and joint marketing by Nova Scotia universities is an interesting one; such support makes it much more feasible for universities to attend educational fairs and to develop joint marketing materials for international student recruitment. Given the scarcity of resources the 80% contribution to eligible costs under the plan is a major asset to these universities.

A major activity supported by the plan has been the College View initiative. In August 1996, a 10-member consortium of Nova Scotia universities and the province signed a three-year, $300,000 contract with the U.S. firm, College View, to market Nova Scotia universities. College View consists of an interactive CD-ROM program with related data services that gives students access to an extensive database of key facts on over 35,000 undergraduate institutions in North America. Over 4,000 high schools in the United States subscribe to College View.

The program provides a wide variety of services; presentation materials are provided by each university and distributed through College View's services. The objectives of the program were to

- Increase the awareness and visibility of Nova Scotia universities in the United States, especially in the key markets in the northeast;
- Increase the number of enquiries and applications;
- Decrease printing and mailing expenses for each university through the use of interactive computer technology.

Given the competitive nature of the recruitment market, it may take time for any strategy, including the College View initiative, to have a measurable impact.

Joint marketing efforts are difficult to implement. For example, admission decision dates among the Nova Scotia universities vary from March 1 to June 1, and the way each institution responds to enquiries also varies. However, the concept of co-marketing is important in recruitment and is being pursued in a number of provinces.

Government initiatives to assist in the recruitment of international students are usually linked with marketing the educational service sector in general and facilitating partnerships with other players including the private sector. Industry Canada has just produced a strategic Sector Competitiveness Framework for the education and training service sector (Industry Canada 1998) which will be followed by a strategic plan identifying target countries and containing a series of useful observations and suggestions that will be of great interest to Canadian universities in terms of potential recruitment in the international field. Several Canadian universities participated in the Team Canada missions, and, on the 1998 mission to Latin America, the education sector was the largest participant group. During this mission, some universities found that a number of private-sector firms also participating in the mission in fields such as energy, mining and high technology already had research or contract linkages with departments or individuals at their university. There is room for much closer links between recruitment and international contract and research activity, especially in the development of short courses and training initiatives that are a promising complement to full-time study for potential students.

A number of case-study universities are developing new approaches to recruitment involving twinning programs and delivery of programs off shore. In one example of a twinning agreement (discussed above in section 3.1.1), Malaysian students will enroll in the Canadian university's courses in management, computer science and engineering, but study at the Malaysian institution for the first 20 months and come to Canada to complete their program. A team from the Canadian institution has already visited Malaysia and developed the structure and the content of the program. The Malaysian students will spend three semesters (12 months) in Canada to complete their BComm, or BSc/BA degrees in computer science and four semesters (two eight-month periods) to complete the BSc (Engineering). Twinning programs can be important revenue generators and provide institutions with a guaranteed source of full fee paying international students. Revenue can also be generated by opening a campus in another country. Two other case-study universities had considered twinning agreements but had decided not to proceed.

The so-called "visa" schools and colleges that cater to high school students from overseas are a major source of international post-secondary student recruitment in Canada. In one case-study institution, 40% of international student recruitment came through this route. Many Canadian school boards are also actively recruiting international students, as are most Canadian private schools. According to CIC data, in 1997, almost 20,000 visa students were enrolled in Canadian secondary schools. Another source is the large number of providers of ESL instruction. This group varies in quality, as ESL teaching institutions are not regulated in Canada, although there are many good ones. At least one case-study institution was developing special relations with selected schools, colleges and ESL schools.

In several case-study institutions, faculty members, students and alumni had been actively involved in international student recruitment. Alumni can be particularly valuable as a potential student can be referred to someone who has studied at the institution in which the student is

interested. In one case-study institution Canadian students interested in participating in exchange agreements were encouraged to participate in voluntary recruitment activities by being given extra points in the competition for places in overseas exchanges as a result of their efforts. An enthusiastic group of student volunteers, both Canadian and international, can be an important recruitment asset.

One case-study institution is using its institutional linkages and exchanges for recruitment at all levels. This institution has over 360 institutional agreements in which over 130 individual faculty members are involved. These faculty members are seen to be an excellent position to promote the university's programs.

Institutional agreements are more than simply student exchanges, as they involve research as well as faculty and student mobility. The case-study university has catalogued these and sees them as important recruiting tools. Individual professors travel widely as part of their academic activities, and the institution suggests that they carry promotional material on university programs. When carried out systematically with some instruction for faculty members, this can be an excellent recruitment strategy.

All case-study universities have exchange agreements, but in some instances these are seen as competing for resources (e.g., residence accommodation) with international student recruitment. They are also often viewed, at best, as revenue neutral and in some instances as a drain on revenues. There is a positive relationship between student-exchange programs and international student recruitment, but this is more effective if it is specifically included in a recruitment strategy.

Several case-study institutions are examining their existing course and program structure and content and are marketing programs perceived to be of special interest to international students. At least three case-study institutions have studied the educational systems of selected target countries to identify specific areas where demand is not being met and where surplus capacity exists in the Canadian institutions. In several institutions, consideration is being given to the provision of programs, or more often, the adaptation of existing programs, specifically geared to the international student market. This is especially the case in business schools, but also occurs in other programs. The quality of the learning experience and the nature of the curriculum offered have been shown to be of significance in a number of surveys of international students (Doorbar 1998).

3.1.4. Admission requirements and procedures

Major innovative changes in recruitment strategies are not always marked by similar changes in admission requirements and procedures. Evidence from case-study institutions shows that changes are taking place, but changes in admission procedures are more common than in admission requirements. Changes in procedures can result from administrative decisions, but changes in requirements require action by university senates, and this can be a slow process.

Admission requirements in all case-study institutions have been established to respond to the Canadian situation and rarely take into account the realities of other academic systems. In extreme cases, this can make entrance by a high school student from another country next to

impossible. In other cases, it can create severe difficulties. Universities in Alberta, for example, do not accept either computer science or economics as university entrance subjects, although in some countries computer science has replaced some mathematics courses in high schools.

A key issue in terms of admission requirements was language competence and this topic is of such importance that it will be considered in a separate section later in the report. Several institutions were reconsidering their approach to language. There are, however, other issues.

In the important U.S. market, where several case-study institutions are concentrating recruitment efforts, SAT scores are widely used to determine a student's suitability to enter university. Students will often be conditionally admitted to U.S. universities on the basis of their preliminary scores on this test. In some of the case-study institutions, SAT scores are not acceptable as evidence of suitability for university entrance. There would seem to be little point in recruiting in the U.S. market if admission requirements do not take into account the realities of that country's high school system.

The ways in which qualifications from other systems are assessed in terms of Canadian admission requirements vary considerably among the case-study institutions as does the acceptability of credentials from students wishing to transfer from universities in other countries. In some case-study institutions, considerable in-house expertise has been built up in this area. In at least two universities, the approach used is to determine and assess the admissions standards required for university in each country and, where appropriate, accept that as the entrance standard for Canada. This is explicitly outlined in the university's promotional and admissions material.

In other case-study institutions an ad hoc approach is used leading to wide discrepancies in the ways individual students are treated depending on the expertise of the person carrying out the assessment. This is particularly the case with transfer students. In one instance, a student from France who had completed 3 years of study in one of the country's "*grandes écoles*" was informed that her qualifications would only allow her to enter a pre-university year in Ontario!

Some case-study institutions have excellent assessment staff and up-to-date information and are making effective use of the information services of the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC). In other cases, the admissions staff are not knowledgeable about other systems and are either unaware of, or choose not to use, the CICIC.

A key variable appears to be the attitude and mind set in the admissions office. In admissions, flexibility is key and this point was made by people in all case-study institutions. The best practices are those where the admissions office is flexible in dealing with the admission of international students without compromising quality and entrance standards. The worst practices are those where a rigid bureaucratic approach is taken and the "letter of the law" is followed. For example, if the entrance requirement is 580 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or equivalent, some admissions officers do not even consider a student whose score is even a few points below this.

Some admission officers adopt a "gatekeeper" approach and find reasons for refusing international students entrance. Others take a different approach and see themselves as facilitators. It has been suggested that admission officers should adopt a service approach to their tasks. Australian admission offices, for example, make heavy use of conditional admissions where the student is conditionally admitted and informed what additional preparation or courses are required to meet the institution's admission criteria. In Canada, too often good students missing an element for admission are simply told that they do not meet university admission standards.

Three of the case-study institutions have taken specific steps to improve the attitude of admission officers. Like many other administrative units in Canadian universities, admissions offices have been suffering from budget cuts. One institution is providing the admissions office with substantial resources from international student revenues to hire new staff. At least three case-study universities routinely include admissions staff on their visits to educational fairs in other countries, increasing their knowledge and understanding of the issues in the process. In one case, where the university chose to attend a number of educational fairs in adjacent countries over a two- or three-week period, the time between individual fairs was used by admissions staff to study the educational system and standards of the countries of the region in situ.

Additional resources are required if admissions procedures are to be improved, especially in terms of the speed and timing of response, which several studies have shown to be of critical importance. If students do not receive a quick response to their applications or enquiries, they are likely to go elsewhere. Resources are, of course, not the only variable involved but without them it is difficult to make the changes required to streamline the admission process.

One improvement that does not require extensive resources is a change from the usual one deadline date, usually June, for all undergraduate applicants. A number of case-study institutions have moved to a rolling admission process with as many as three entry points per year. This change alone is a significant improvement from the perspective of international students especially those from systems where the high school year is different from that in Canada.

The timing of admission offers and requirements for acceptance can be crucial. For the United States, release dates for offers of admission varies from school to school. However, by agreement, all U.S. universities that are members of the National Association for College Admission Counseling require students to accept an offer of admission by May 1. In some instances, the response must be received before a Canadian institution has issued an offer of admission. One reason why Nova Scotia's recruitment initiative has not been more successful is the fact that most admission offers do not go out until June.

The United States, Australia and the United Kingdom all make admission offers faster and at more appropriate times than most Canadian institutions. Australian institutions, for example, have set themselves a standard of 24-hour response to admissions enquiries (Doorbar 1998) and time their admissions to suit the academic timetable of the high school systems in their major target countries. The best Canadian response times are about a week for selected countries and this was achieved at only one case-study institution. At others, the delay in response can run to

weeks if not months, and the CEC Network reports considerable student frustration with this situation.

Additional key changes in admission procedures at one or more of the case-study universities include:

- Establishing a single point of contact for international undergraduate students that can be reached by telephone, fax, e-mail or post and that is staffed by a person dedicated to responding within one week to all priority countries.
- Giving priority to international students by putting them at the head of the admissions queue.
- Sending acceptances by fax or courier rather than regular mail.
- Adding human resources to the admissions office to deal with Canadian admissions so that experienced staff with knowledge of the educational systems in target countries can deal with international admissions.
- Developing a computer-based prospect tracking system within the computer-based information system. This special software allows staff dedicated to international admissions to monitor the progress of applications and give ongoing information to students.
- Analyzing the educational system of target countries on an ongoing basis.
- Publishing and distributing admission material much earlier than previously and making timely offers of admission, as well as offers up to one year before the program begins.
- Issuing two letters of admission to international students to facilitate immigration — one to be used in applying for a visa and the second outlining the academic conditions that the student must meet before being admitted.
- Designing an international application form for fax transmission, accepting applications sent by fax and using the Internet for on-line applications.
- Allowing payment of application and document evaluation fees by credit card and exploring the possibility of allowing payment via Internet.
- Inviting applicants to authorize a third party to receive personal confidential information about them. Most universities have confidentiality rules preventing the release of application or admission information to anyone without the express written consent of the applicant. Allowing third-party authorization is especially useful when parents, or relatives in Canada, are involved in assisting the applicant.
- Ensuring that people who have been specially trained and sensitized to the various barriers facing students applying from abroad give these students personal attention, advice and assistance.

Most of the best practices described in this section have been implemented only within the last two or three years and, so far, by only a few institutions, but they are improving the competitive position of Canadian institutions in the marketplace for international students.

3.2. The graduate level

Most of the case-study universities market their graduate and undergraduate programs together, and many of the innovative recruitment strategies outlined above apply equally at the graduate level. However, significant differences between graduate and undergraduate levels do exist, especially in terms of admissions procedures. At the graduate level, there is also greater differentiation between universities and among programs within each university. The choice of

university must be made with more care because not all offer a full range of graduate programs and the research resources available to a student — including laboratory space, finances, equipment, library resources and faculty supervision — also differ. There is also considerable variation among graduate programs in each university and in the quality of faculty within programs; some can be world class, others are not.

There are also differences in the nature of graduate programs in Canadian universities, especially at the master's level. Some master's programs can consist of course work, others require a thesis. The so-called "professional" graduate programs such business, architecture, social work, library science, further complicate the situation. The major post-baccalaureate programs in subjects such as medicine, dentistry and law are again different in character. What have been called "research intensive" programs dominate at the PhD level, but not all universities have PhD programs and those that do don't necessarily have a full range.

Therefore, international recruitment at the graduate level has to be much more targeted than at the undergraduate level and requires much greater knowledge of specific program content and strengths. In the admissions process, whether this is centralized or decentralized, the role of the individual academic unit, or in some instances, individual faculty supervisors, plays an indispensable role.

The role of the international student at the graduate level is also quite different. In programs such as engineering and science, they are often important members of the research team whose presence can be critical to the success of a research project. In some specialized programs, there are insufficient Canadian applicants to create the critical mass required to make a graduate program viable; these programs would have difficulty surviving without enrolment of international students.

3.2.1. Language competence

Language competence takes an increased significance at the graduate level. Graduate students not only have to cope with the learning environment in English or French, but they are often also required to assist with the instruction of undergraduate students. Many are funded as teaching or research assistants and are involved in leading discussion groups or supervising laboratories. In some institutions, PhD students act as lecturers for introductory courses. Funding for a large proportion of international graduate students includes a teaching or research assistantship component.

Many graduate programs involve a high degree of discussion and seminar work rather than lectures; thus, students' speaking and listening skills in English or French must be good. In addition, graduate students are expected to begin work immediately, leaving little time to practice their second-language skills. Writing skills must be strong in programs where a thesis is required. The language issue will be discussed more fully in section 4.

3.2.2. Recruitment strategies

In 1997, graduate students made up about 41% of international students in Canada; this often represents 25% or more of the students in graduate programs.

Recruitment strategies among the eight case-study universities vary, but there is a strong dependence on the activities of individual faculties and academic units to recruit through their own networks and academic contacts. In many of the case-study institutions, departments had developed their own graduate brochures and, in some instances, individual web pages to supplement those produced by the university as part of the general recruitment strategy. The details of these general approaches were given in the previous section and will not be repeated here, but attention will be drawn to additional initiatives of special interest.

In one case-study institution, a strategic decision has been made to concentrate international student recruitment at the graduate level. Attempts are made to recruit international students who come with guaranteed financial support. Canada is not the country of first choice for many governments in selecting a destination for the students they fund. The same applies to students supported by international agencies such as the World Bank. A number of Canadian NGOs, such as the Canadian Bureau for International Education and World University Service of Canada have been aggressive in seeking contracts with foreign governments to place their students in Canadian institutions, mainly at the graduate level and AUCC has also played an important role. However, this is an underdeveloped market for Canada. Providing "one-stop shopping" for foreign governments and agencies wishing to place international graduate students and develop special programs and relationships is good practice and a number of case-study institutions are following this approach.

One such initiative is with CONACYT in Mexico. CONACYT is a major funding agency for the support of graduate students, especially, but not exclusively, in science and engineering. Given that graduate programs in Mexico are not yet developed enough to meet demand, CONACYT funds students to study overseas. However, such students are only allowed to enrol in programs that have been examined and approved by CONACYT disciplinary advisory committees. The dossier required for recognition is quite detailed and must be in the format specified; many of the case-study universities had experienced difficulties in getting their graduate programs recognized.

A personal visit to CONACYT headquarters in Mexico City revealed a new opportunity for the graduate schools of all Ontario universities through the Ontario Council for Graduate Studies (OCGS). The effective devaluation of the Mexican currency as a result of the "peso crisis" had eroded the value of scholarship funds available to CONACYT. In discussions with the director and the senior staff at CONACYT, it was suggested that Canada could be an attractive alternative destination to the United States and Europe where the majority of the students were being sent. As Canadian graduate schools give support to outstanding students — through scholarships, teaching and research assistantships — a cost-sharing arrangement for CONACYT students could be worked out. Although there have been problems in implementation of this plan, the recruiting strategy was an innovative one. In Latin America, the development of personal relationships with key decision-makers is important to effective recruiting. Recently, a new agreement was signed between CONACYT and the OCGS.

Several case-study universities have also developed special relationships with foreign government agencies in Malaysia, the Middle East and Latin America, which have led to a variety of innovative arrangements at the graduate level, including "sandwich" programs (where the student does course work in Canada but thesis work at home) and the delivery of elements of graduate programs through various electronic and distance education programs. These are good recruitment strategies at the graduate level, and universities should explore them more vigorously.

All of the case-study universities have international development projects, and some have been successful in linking these to international student recruitment. One of the more successful in this respect has specifically built on a number of CIDA projects to recruit international students. In addition to the CIDA-funded projects, faculty members have a number of other funded research linkages. These are specifically built on to recruit international graduate students from targeted geographic areas using the experience, contacts and language abilities of faculty members. The awareness and cultural sensitivity of the faculty is an important asset in recruitment, but is rarely used effectively. One case-study institution is systematically using research linkages to recruit students and another is working in partnership with local institutions in targeted countries, including involving local faculty in the joint supervision of theses. Often the thesis topic is identified before the student arrives. Where joint supervision is not feasible, a professor from the local university is named as a supernumerary member of the thesis committee.

All case-study universities have international institutional linkages, but from the perspective of graduate studies, the most successful are those that include joint research and visits by faculty as well as graduate students. Effective use of such linkages can be an important recruitment tool. Even undergraduate exchange programs can be important in this respect. One example is the Ontario/Rhône Alpes Student Exchange program, which involves all 17 universities in Ontario. The government of Ontario funds the program. Students selected for the program in both Ontario and in France are of well above average academic ability. Several of the French students who first came to Canada as exchange students have entered graduate programs in Ontario. They have also made the quality of Ontario universities better known in France and this word-of-mouth information flow from students to students is good publicity. Ontario has a similar program with the Baden Wurtemburg region of Germany. Ontario students, in both France and Germany, increase awareness and knowledge of the Ontario university system in universities in those countries. Comparative research (Doorbar 1998) has shown that 60% of all graduate students in the United States and the United Kingdom had previously participated in a study abroad program.

Some case-study institutions are making use of existing international linkages to recruit graduate students. However, in many other institutions, there is not even a database of information about the extent of these linkages on which to build nor an awareness of the opportunities in this respect.

Case-study universities are also experimenting with the delivery of graduate programs offshore. In one instance, a full master's program is offered in situ with support from CIDA and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and several institutions are delivering elements of their programs offshore. Some are doing this through franchise operations, but use is

also being made of "sandwich" programs. Several case-study universities are involved in the Government of Egypt's "channel" program, which involves joint supervision by an Egyptian and a Canadian professor of students enrolled in an Egyptian institution. Students complete course work in Canada and the degree is granted in Egypt.

3.2.3. Professional graduate programs

Business schools have been active in the recruitment of international graduate students, but tend to act in a fairly independent manner. At one case-study in the MBA program is part of a major recruitment strategy and, along with other professional programs, such as MEng, MArch, EdD, MJourn, PharmD and MCS, it benefits from the general recruitment approach taken. At one institution, the strong business school is a major focal point for international student recruitment; 15% of student intake is international with China and India the main target areas, although more recently, recruitment is being attempted through the use of agents in both the UAE and Brazil. The use of agents to recruit students at the graduate level is unusual but appears to be effective. A special program has been funded by CIDA for students from Vietnam. Business schools in all case-study universities are actively recruiting international students and one interviewee argued that the Canadian market for MBAs is softening, increasing the space available for international students.

3.2.4. Targeted programs

Not all graduate programs are equally attractive to international students and not all graduate programs wish to attract significant numbers of students from other countries. At least two institutions have adopted the good practice of clearly identifying programs to which recruitment will be directed and the establishing specific enrolment targets. This allows the concentration of scarce resources and the development of an effective strategy. There are excellent examples of such an approach in at least two case-study institutions.

3.2.5. Education fairs

Attendance at education fairs can be an important recruitment strategy, but requires the involvement of people who are knowledgeable about graduate programs. If university representatives are not familiar with graduate studies, their participation is less effective and often involves no more than distributing graduate brochures. Some case-study universities have included people from the faculty of graduate studies in their delegations to education fairs. Course-based programs are easier to market than research-based programs.

3.2.6. Fees and graduate student funding

A major constraint in the recruitment of international graduate students is funding. Graduate students appear to be even more cost conscious than undergraduates; tuition costs and the availability of financial support in terms of scholarships and teaching and research assistantships are very important. The case-study universities are extremely conscious of these financial considerations, which, of course, are affected by provincial fee regulation and deregulation.

They have adopted a variety of approaches to fee structure, depending on the flexibility allowed them by provincial regulations. In deregulated situations, such as Ontario, each university has adopted a different fee strategy, sometimes on a program by program basis. In some institutions, this means full cost recovery in all graduate programs. In one case-study institution, a decision

has been made to progressively lower tuition fees for international graduate students over the next three years. A university, whose provincial government unilaterally increased fees for graduate students, responded by finding scholarships and other research support for its international students who are considered vital to the health of its research-intensive graduate programs. Institutions in Quebec benefit from special arrangements with France, in which French graduate students study in Quebec at domestic fee rates, and a number of students benefit from tuition scholarships resulting from Quebec's special agreements with 47 other francophone countries.

The other critical area is funding support available for international graduate students. Again the case-study institutions exhibit a wide variety of approaches, and there are substantial differences between academic units in the same institution. In some, international students are not a priority and receive little financial support. In others, they are considered very important and every effort is made to attract and support them. All case-study institutions reported a lack of adequate funding to support international graduate students, but a number of strategies are being used to mitigate this situation. These include:

- A carefully targeted approach, concentrating resources in selected programs,
- Aggressive pursuit of students funded by international agencies or by their own governments,
- The creation of special institutional scholarship funds,
- Seeking private-sector funding,
- Making support of international graduate students an integral part of funded international research projects and contracts.

The fiscal crisis facing one case-study institution is forcing it to reduce its support for international graduate students. It argues that these students represent a net loss to the university as their tuition revenues do not cover costs and the university receives no provincial funding for them. If they are offered scholarships and financial support, there is a further financial drain. Recruitment is to be aimed at domestic students, who bring in basic income units; the operating funds "saved" by reducing support to international students can be used to make more attractive offers to domestic students.

Lack of funding also affects the resources that graduate schools can put into recruitment efforts, but this is a minor problem compared with the lack of resources for student support. Except for the Medical Research Council (MRC), granting councils do not offer scholarships to international students, although the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and MRC operating grants can be used to support students. CIDA, which used to be a major source of funding, has been progressively reducing its scholarship programs, and support from IDRC, although important, is limited.

3.2.7. Admission requirements

Admissions procedures for international students at the graduate level vary. At some case-study institutions, undergraduate and graduate admissions are handled by the same office. At others, the faculty of graduate studies has it own admissions and registration office or a separate unit within the registrar's office. In all cases, the individual academic unit plays a key role and admission decisions are largely decentralized.

In some instances, the first enquiry comes to the registrar's office. This is then sent to the academic unit concerned for decision on admissibility, then returned to the registrar's office for final approval and issuance of the acceptance letter. In other instances, applications come directly to departments and only successful admissions are sent to the registrar or to the office of graduate studies for approval.

The potential for a delay in response is large, and several institutions have examined ways in which the process can be streamlined, but with limited success. The principal sources of delay are often at the department level, although there are also delays in issuing acceptance letters by the registrar's and admissions offices. Further delays can be caused by the funding process. Although a student may have been deemed admissible, a decision on funding may have to wait until the results of grant applications are known or until university scholarship and assistantship decisions have been made.

At the departmental level, the position of supervisor of graduate studies is a three-year, rotating post, although in some case-study universities the term is shorter. The supervisor may have no knowledge of different education systems or may be knowledgeable about some but not others. Enthusiasm for this administrative post varies. A second key person at the department level is the graduate studies secretary, who is responsible for ensuring that files are complete and ready for consideration for admission. As at the undergraduate level, the completion of a file for an international graduate student can take months, especially when letters of reference do not arrive. Some institutions use a self-administered application procedure, where the student is responsible for collecting all documents and sealed letters of reference; this helps to speed up the file completion process.

The knowledge, enthusiasm and efficiency of the supervisor and secretary are critical to the speed of the admission process, as are the resources available to support them. In some institutions, these people are given some formal training, including how to deal with international files, but this is not systematic and none of the case-study institutions is doing this well. Some departments deal with files on a year-round basis. Others collect the files of all applicants before making a decision on next year's cohort. In research intensive programs, a supervisor has to be identified, and often a file will be sent to several department members before this happens. Some departments have a graduate admissions committee, which must meet to decide on the acceptability of students to a program.

Once the department's recommendation for admission is made, either to the faculty of graduate studies or to the registrar depending on the circumstances, a further delay can ensue if these offices question the admissibility of the student in terms of university regulations or feel that documents or letters of reference need to be authenticated. A frequent source of discussion is the English-language competence of students or, in some instances, the role of professional experience in assessing an applicant for professional programs.

Resource constraints on registrars and graduate admissions offices also affect the speed at which acceptance letters can be generated. Good international graduate students often apply to more than one institution, often in different countries. The speed and nature of the response they get is important. In only two of the case-study institutions are international graduate students being

given special treatment in terms of admission procedures. This is a practice that more institutions may wish to emulate.

The prevailing attitude toward the recruitment of international graduate students at the department level varies. In some departments in case-study universities, student files from some countries, such as China, are simply ignored. In others, such as departments of civil engineering, where up to 50% and in one case 75% of the students are international, they are given special attention. For many faculty members, the international student file from some countries is a mystery as they do not understand the qualifications from other systems and there is a tendency to reject rather than spend time investigating further. In some case-study institutions, the graduate studies office has built up expertise to which departmental supervisors have access, but this was the exception rather than the rule. A good central source of information helps the admission process.

3.2.8. Integration of graduate studies with admission and recruitment activities

In relatively few institutions have graduate studies been effectively integrated into the international admission and recruitment activities of the university although there were some exceptions. Officers spearheading international recruitment and admissions are, more often than not, more knowledgeable about undergraduate than graduate programs, and this influences their perspective and approach. In one case-study institution, the international office had built up considerable knowledge about academic standards in a variety of countries, to which graduate supervisors could refer. A "fast-track" system was also developed for international students arriving with full funding from international agencies and governments, and the international office follows these files from initial enquiry to admission decision. However, this does not apply to all international students, only to those on funded programs. As at the undergraduate level, students on special programs in several case-study institutions often receive more attention than other applicants.

4. Language competence

In the six English case-study institutions, testing for English language competence is a major issue at both the graduate and undergraduate level. Language competence is clearly important if a student is to succeed in his or her studies, but the case studies highlight an increasing debate on whether this should be an admission or a program requirement and on the validity of using high TOEFL scores as admission requirements. In administrative terms, a large amount of time and effort is also clearly being spent on testing for language competence as an admission requirement in universities.

Although the same situation does not exist at French case-study universities, competence in French is still critical. French case-study universities in Quebec see language competence as a program requirement. No test of competence is given before admission; it is assumed that when students apply for admission, they are aware that the language of instruction is French and are confident in their ability to function at the university level in that language.

However, all undergraduate domestic and international students are given a French language test after admission. If they fail, they have one year to improve and French language training facilities are available on campus to help them. One graduate program pairs up each non-francophone student with a francophone partner to help with language on a one-to-one basis. This practice leads to positive results and could be emulated by other programs including those in English universities.

All of the English case-study universities, view English language competence as an admission requirement and set specific test levels that must be achieved as a condition of admission. TOEFL is the most commonly used test. However, most universities also accept MELAB (Michigan English Language Assessment Battery) and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) with specified scores and some accept CanTEST and CAEL (Carleton Academic English Language) scores. The majority of case-study institutions set the TOEFL requirement at 580 or over for undergraduates, and several departments demand a score of 600. At the graduate level, most case-study universities still use a score of 550, although individual departments often set scores of 600.

A number of case-study universities are exploring and implementing a range of options to continue to ensure language competence while improving flexibility. Some are considering more latitude for admitting students who do not achieve the required minimum TOEFL score, and one has chosen to lower the required score. Certain universities have also put in place preparatory services for incoming graduate students, particularly business students, some weeks in advance of the beginning of formal classes. Many have a second language school on campus to facilitate language testing and teaching support. Where a second language school does not exist, several are making special arrangements with language teaching providers off campus.

As noted in a recent study, since 1992 almost all Canadian universities have raised their minimum required TOEFL score from 550 to 580 at the undergraduate level (Canadian Psychological Association 1998). In every one of the six English case-study institutions, there were reports of pressure from departments and individual faculty members to raise the test standards even further. The widely held assumption appears to be that higher TOEFL scores would mean that students would be better equipped to deal with the academic demands of programs. However, there is growing empirical evidence to suggest that there is no correlation between TOEFL scores and academic performance (Canadian Psychological Association 1998)

There is also concern among the case-study institutions about the effectiveness of TOEFL as a test of English language competence, especially in light of recent moves toward a computer-based test. The test has been substantially changed with new test scores and different methods of determining language competence. The new testing procedure will be available in specified centres on a year-round basis. If TOEFL scores continue to be used as an admission requirement, these changes will require administrative adjustments in admission offices. Other concerns include the increased cost of the test and the lack of familiarity of international students in many countries with computer-based testing. There are now some useful alternatives to TOEFL, and to both MELAB and IELTS, including Canadian-based CanTEST and CAEL. These tests are now more widely available and are being delivered overseas. CAEL, in particular, has special

relevance for graduate students, in that it also measures speaking and listening ability and may be used to test from a discipline-specific perspective.

One Canadian university has taken a specific approach to the issue of testing for language competence based on a systematic analysis and empirical evidence. The university conducted a study to assess whether its earlier decision to raise the minimum TOEFL score required for admission from 550 to 580 was justified. Comparative studies of various students' academic performance and graduation rates showed that undergraduate students with scores in the 550–579 range performed as well as students with scores in the 580–677 range and as well as Canadian counterparts (Canadian Psychological Association 1998). As a result, the university's senate decided to delete all reference to TOEFL and scores from other similar English language tests as standards for admission. The rationale was that requiring a high TOEFL score would preclude otherwise qualified candidates from admission, and that the use of TOEFL scores might adversely affect diversity within the student body. The academic record remains the major focus for evaluation of admission requirements. Although language competency test scores are retained as part of the application for admission, no standard is specified. Responsibility for meeting the standard for English proficiency in both oral and written work is held to be the student's.

Several interviewees in the other case-study universities expressed concern about the ethics of bringing international students to Canada at high cost, then failing them because their English is inadequate. There is merit in the suggestion made by one interviewee in helping students self-assess their language ability by putting an appropriate test on Internet. International students and their parents are rational people who are perfectly capable of making decisions if they are fully aware of what is required in terms of language competence. Excellent preparatory courses are already being offered in both French and English as a second language both in Canada and overseas. Concerns raised in the case study suggest that the time has come to reassess the value of language tests as an admission requirement and to consider Canadian-based tests of language competence as alternatives to TOEFL.

The existing situation in terms of the language issue is summarized in Table 1 (Ricketts 1998).

Table 1
Approaches of the case-study institutions to language requirements

ESL/FSL* as an admission requirement	ESL/FSL as a program requirement	ESL/FSL as a performance requirement
• Reliance on applicant obtaining a minimum score in a standard language test, e.g., TOEFL, IELTS, CanTEST, CAEL • Student cannot be admitted without acceptable score • Conditional admissions offered but condition must be met before registration • Places responsibility solely on student	• ESL/FSL training built into first year of program • Unconditional admission given, but language requirement must be met to continue to year two • Cost to student • Upgrading may be required for activities such as teaching assistantships • Places responsibility on institution to provide access to in-house or local ESL/FSL training	• Requires acceptable language performance as part of academic program • May involve completion of a voluntary test to indicate acceptable level • Places responsibility on student to be able to perform at an acceptable level in the language of the institution; however, it also implies an institutional responsibility to provide access to appropriate language training if required
University may provide in-house ESL/FSL training facilities	University needs to provide in-house or local ESL/FSL training facilities	University needs to provide in-house language testing and access to ESL/FSL training

*ESL, English as a second language; FSL, French as a second language.

5. University capacity to accept international students

Our second research objective was to identify factors that influence the capacity of universities to accept international students. Some of the relevant issues have already been touched on in earlier sections, because they also affect recruitment. In this section capacity issues that affect undergraduate and graduate students are dealt with together.

Canadian universities have the capacity to absorb more international students; the case-study universities have the capacity to accept at least double the numbers of existing international students. The best practice, illustrated by several of the case-study universities, is to make a detailed institutional analysis of the absorptive capacity, set targets and develop a strategic plan, including an analysis of the finances and resources required and the potential return to the university in both fiscal and academic terms. All of the case-study universities have analyzed their capacity, but some have been more thorough than others. This initial planning and analysis is key to success, and universities that have taken a systematic approach to their capacity from recruitment through graduation and beyond are best placed. Several of the case-study universities have followed this approach to a greater or lesser degree. Others have only begun to ask the questions. One case-study institution has analyzed its fiscal situation and decided that attention must be focused on domestic rather than international students.

5.1. Student services

A key component of capacity is the availability and provision of adequate services for international students. An excellent report produced by one institution argued that an essential part of the plan to increase the number of international students is to ensure that recruitment is accompanied by commensurate attention to good orientation and to the academic, administrative and social services provided to international students. Retention and recruitment are closely linked and financial resources are applied to both.

Good student services are important, and a direct relation to recruitment has appeared in the questionnaire and focus group responses of international students. In response to the question, where did you first hear of the university and why did you come here, the vast majority of students say that it was due to the recommendation of previous students or their friends and relations. Money spent on ensuring that services to international students are good may be the best investment in a recruitment strategy. Failure to provide adequate service can have negative consequences in both the short and, especially, the long term. The best practices are those where both recruitment and services are planned together and where the international students are consulted and involved in both processes.

Services for international students in the eight case-study universities vary from excellent to very unsatisfactory and are directly affected by two variables: the importance that the university puts on international students and the availability of resources. This latter factor is key and has been affected by government cut backs to universities in all provinces, but it has also been affected by internal university decisions on funding cuts. Another important variable is the administrative structure of the university and how key people in service provision are drawn on or consulted about recruitment and admissions procedures, especially international student advisors and directors of student services. Key factors to be considered when increasing the number of international students on campus include:

Welcome
Academic advising and supervision
Accommodation
Business office
Peer support
Community relations
Work opportunities
Orientation
Counseling, including immigration counseling
Health services
Religion
Social integration
Financial support

The case-study universities show a variety of good practices in this respect. Several have welcoming services and meet the students at the airport on arrival. At one institution, the international students provide the service themselves through the International Student Centre funded by the student association. Orientation practices vary, but all case-study universities provide some general orientation, and several faculties and schools of business run supporting programs. Some institutions have excellent physical facilities for international students in the form of international centres, and another positive feature is the involvement of Canadian students in many campuses on a voluntary basis in helping make international students welcome.

Academic advice for undergraduates is a more problematic area. International student advisors usually have neither the mandate nor the expertise to become involved in this. One case-study institution has arrangements with special advisors in the faculties of arts and science who provide students with academic advice and guidance through the registration process. One advisor telephoned all 41 new students coming into her faculty and invited them to come to talk to her.

The cultural sensitivity and awareness of the individual faculty members advising international students is important, especially at the graduate level where faculty–student relationships are more common. International student feedback from the surveys and focus groups was generally positive, but there was significant dissatisfaction in many instances. A number of specific examples of cultural misunderstanding were given, such as the graduate student from a culture where giving gifts to authority figures, such as a professor, is considered both polite and mandatory. At the first meeting with his graduate supervisor, he presented his gift which was promptly rejected by the professor who thought the student was trying to bribe him. The student was devastated.

Undercurrents of racism on some campuses among a small minority of Canadian students, faculty and staff have been reported. Some case-study universities have race-relations advisors and run cultural awareness training services, but report that the people who come to these voluntary sessions are the least likely to need such training.

Counseling services for international students are important as is peer support counseling, and a number of case-study universities provide such services. Again counselors must be aware of and sensitive to international student needs which vary considerably in nature and expression by cultural group. Peer support and student clubs on campus can be especially important in this respect.

Accommodation is always a problem for international students. Some case-study universities have developed home stay programs, which, based on international student feedback, are often popular, but recent concerns over legal liability have caused several universities to cancel this service. Several case-study universities make special arrangements in university residences for international students, and this is good practice. However, segregating them in separate residences, thus creating international student "ghettos" is not good practice.

In increasing the number of international students, universities must ensure that health service personnel are involved and consulted, as disease patterns and immunities can be different for international students. Coordination between international student services and health services is also important for other reasons. For example, one case-study institution uses the health services office, through which all international students must pass, as a good place to inform them about the other services available on campus.

A major concern for students from Muslim countries is that proper facilities exist on campus to allow them to practice their religion. Several case-study universities provide prayer room space together with facilities for washing before prayers. Other case-study institutions do not appear to have considered religious issues in their planning. The needs of all religious denominations must

be considered including the provision of acceptable food in residence and elsewhere on the campus, as well as the timing of tests and examinations in relation to religious holidays.

Social integration is another aspect of student services. A place to gather, socialize and meet Canadian students as well as students from other countries is important. Most case-study universities have an international centre of some kind, but some do not even have a full-time international student advisor. In one case-study university, the post was left vacant for over a year before being filled. Student services are especially well organized at the two French case-study institutions, both of which are examples of good practice in this respect. At one case-study institution, individual care and attention is given to students at the graduate level as a result of the special efforts of a senior administrator who considers it his personal responsibility to the international students (and their parents) whom he has helped recruit.

As a multicultural country, Canada benefits from its immigrant communities from all over the world. Involving community groups with the university is good practice and can be especially useful in helping international students integrate socially. Several case-study institutions have paid special attention to fostering community linkages with very positive results.

In all case-study institutions, the need for better services for international students is recognized; several are not doing as well as they would like, not because of lack of interest, but because of lack of resources. Investment in recruiting without a similar commitment to student services is not good practice. If special resources are to be found for recruitment, comparable resources must be found for the student services that are critical to retention and the recruitment of other international students.

Although not new, another area of concern is the creation of two classes of international students, especially on campuses where there are special programs. As described earlier, some case-study institutions have entered, or plan to enter, into innovative recruitment programs on a full cost recovery basis and, in some instances, full cost recovery plus profit. Students in the special programs receive a level of personal and academic service well above that available to regular international students (at one campus this includes special housing). The resources to pay for this service come from the high tuition fees. Giving good service and value for money is good practice, but if there is too great a contrast with what is available to other international and Canadian students, it may have negative consequences. At most case-study institutions, all international students receive a similar level of service, which varies from excellent in most to unsatisfactory in at least one.

An important often-overlooked element in services to international students is the finance office. Innovations identified during the case-study visits include the acceptance of payment by credit card and, although no university has yet implemented electronic payments via a web site, this is certainly being considered. During the Asian currency crisis, finance offices of some case-study universities made special arrangements on an individual basis for students from that region. The attitude of all administrative staff is important, as is shown in feedback from international students, and the attitude of business office staff is especially important in this respect.

Service to international students extends all the way to graduation and beyond, and in this area Canadian universities are only just beginning to address key issues. Many underestimate the importance of international students and their parents at graduation. Good practices at some case-study institutions include meeting parents at the airport and giving them special attention, but this is the exception rather than the rule. For any family, graduation is an important event, but for Asian families in particular it is a very special occasion. Cultural insensitivity can have a very damaging effect at graduation. At one university with a significant number of graduating Malaysian students, the president sat with his legs crossed and the soles of his feet visible to the audience throughout much of the graduation ceremony. This posture is extremely disrespectful in Malaysian culture, and several parents in the audience were upset by this display of rudeness; they indicated in their own language that they would not send their children to that institution in the future. This unintentional act had a very negative impact.

Several case-study institutions are making effective use of their alumni and are involving them in the planning for, and recruitment of, international students. The role of the alumni office is important; best practices are achieved where alumni relations are considered an integral part of the approach taken to international students. Many universities routinely carry out exit surveys of their graduates, but others do not. Some have no adequate records of the whereabouts of their international graduate students. The best practices, followed by several of the case-study universities, are those where international alumni are kept fully informed of university news and developments and are given the opportunity to contribute to the university in other than financial terms. Several case-study universities have established alumni clubs overseas and international students are often given advice and sometimes send-off parties by graduates of the institution in their home countries. Presidents of some case-study institutions have visited other countries, especially those of the Pacific Rim, and this can have a very positive effect.

The provision of student services for international students is both expensive and labour intensive, but several case-study institutions are making this investment. In some cases, the number of international students on campus is small, making it possible to give them individual attention. As numbers increase, this will become increasingly difficult. Good practice means carefully planning for expanded student services at the same time as plans are made for increased international student enrolment.

5.2. Faculty capacity

Faculty resources are critical to the capacity of a university to absorb international students at the undergraduate level, but even more so at the graduate level where supervision is a key concern. This aspect of the capacity of all case-study institutions has been adversely affected by cutbacks in government funding. In some institutions, retiring faculty have not been replaced, and in most institutions, fewer and fewer people are being asked to do more and more and faculty morale is being affected.

There is a wealth of international inexperience among the faculty on all of the case-study campuses, and best practices involve channeling this experience and using it effectively. Two case-study institutions are doing this well. There are individual "pockets of enthusiasm" on all case-study campuses, but seldom is faculty involvement systematically organized and encouraged.

In several case-study institutions, there was a marked difference in the perspective of individual faculty members or of academic units from that of senior university administrators with respect to the recruitment and admission of international students. In some, the enthusiasm of senior administration for increased international student enrolment is not shared by the faculty; in others, faculty are concerned that the university is not doing nearly enough.

Even in institutions where there is widespread support for internationalization, concerns were expressed over the difficulty of finding graduate supervisors for international students in some programs. In some graduate departments, international graduate student applications are considered last, and they are admitted only if a qualified Canadian cannot be found. This is usually because of constraints in both funding and supervision, but in some instances it is deliberate policy.

Some graduate supervisors expressed concern over accepting an international student based on language skills and whether they would actually arrive. If research or contract funds are being used to bring in a graduate student in science and engineering, for example, this is often for a specific research project or contract. If that student does not arrive or is delayed, the impact on the project can be substantial and the faculty member has to find another student at short notice, which in some fields is very difficult. A number of case-study institutions have adjusted their admission procedures to allow students to come in at different times during the year but if a graduate student expected to work on a project is delayed, the funding may have to be given to another student. However, a written offer to the original recipient creates an obligation that may not be able to be met if the student comes a term later. This view was balanced by others who were enthusiastic about the recruitment of international graduate students and reported that they include some of the best students they have ever had.

As the offshore activities mentioned earlier are planned and implemented, the role of faculty members takes on new dimensions. At present, the scale of such activities is very small and those involved in them are usually very enthusiastic. Effective use is also being made of "early retirees," and opportunities are being given to postdoctoral students having difficulty finding their first teaching job. However, the expansion of such offshore activities may stretch faculty capacity as some members are required to teach overseas. The general impression from the case studies is that many faculty members are already overloaded and their capacity to take on new activities in the labour-intensive, international student field is limited. This may well be a constraint to the increased recruitment of international students that should be carefully considered in the planning process. If faculty are not consulted and involved, strategies to increase recruitment are likely to be less successful.

5.3. Support staff capacity

The capacity of support staff is also limited on all case-study campuses, again as a result of funding cutbacks. As outlined in earlier sections there are numerous good practices to improve the recruitment and admission of international students and the services provided to them, but these demand additional financial and human resources that are not always available. In some case-study institutions, there has been a severe reduction in the number of support staff positions as a result of a government underfunding of the university sector and internal decisions on where cuts were to be made. Again, people are being asked to do more and more and, in some areas

such as admissions and student services, pressure on them is increasing. This point came up again and again during the case studies.

Where international student recruitment generates new income that can be invested in direct support for academic programs and support services, both faculty and support staff respond very positively. Where the faculty and staff are expected to take on new tasks without additional resources, there is less likely to be enthusiasm. The worst case is where the benefits of tuition from international students or international projects are absorbed into general university revenues with an inadequate share being put back into support for international students and international activities. Examples of all these situations exist at the case-study universities.

5.4. Support for student mobility

Student mobility is increasing dramatically, and all case-study institutions had active and expanding academic linkages and exchange programs. In terms of the content of their programs, Canadian institutions are becoming more international and less parochial. Financial support for such programs, although not great, is increasing and mobility programs funded by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) for the European Union, Mexico and the United States have been welcomed by universities. On case-study campuses, there was also evidence of private-sector support increasing the international capacity of the institution.

5.5. Scholarship resources

Scholarship resources to support international students are still inadequate, and this is a serious problem. Several interviewees commented on this issue and saw it as a major constraint on the capacity of universities to absorb more international students. With the exception of the MRC, major granting councils do not provide scholarship support to international students. Important programs like the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan have been severely cut back.

Although the CIDA scholarship program has been progressively reduced, one graduate program is receiving significant support. Students are also supported if they are an integral part of CIDA funded projects under both the Tier I and Tier II programs, and this continues to be an important source of funding for students from developing countries and is being used effectively by several case-study institutions.

Francophone institutions have benefited from the introduction of the *Programme canadien de bourses de la Francophonie* and Quebec institutions from provincial government scholarship arrangements with selected francophone countries. The government of France and various regions in France also provide substantial scholarship support to French students wishing to study in Canada. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has a number of reciprocal scholarship arrangements with G7 countries but these have been seriously cut back by budget cuts.

For many institutions, a major source of funding for international graduate studies is provided through National Science and Engineering Council (NSERC) operating funds. In June 1998, NSERC announced a new International Opportunities Fund, although the operational details of this were not available at the time of writing. A welcome result of increased federal government

support to NSERC is the 10% across-the-board increase in operating funds to all NSERC award holders, increasing monies available for student support.

Other granting councils have also made improvements. In Ontario, a small number of Ontario Graduate Scholarships continue to be available for international students, although there are only 60 out of 1,300, and the student must be in Ontario for a year before application can be made. IDRC also provides support for international research scholars.

However, these sources are inadequate to support a significant increase in international students. At the undergraduate level, little scholarship support is available, although as outlined earlier some case-study institutions have established special scholarship funds for this purpose. In several case-study institutions, concern was expressed that the current fiscal situation and the lack of financial support will seriously affect the access of academically-qualified international students from countries or families who cannot afford the high costs of study abroad and that this will adversely affect the mix of students on the campus.

6. A summary of case-study practice

The case studies suggested three categories of practice at the eight universities (Ricketts 1998). These categories (Table 2) are "composites" of university practice. Category X represents the best practices uncovered by the study whereas Category Y describes practices that still need some improvement, but are moving in the right direction. Category Z outlines practices that are not conducive to international student recruitment and admission. Although the distinction between categories is often a matter of degree, these broad characterizations are useful general summaries. The case study institutions' practices in the various elements of the admission and recruitment process fall into different categories, with most institutions' overall approach falling into Category Y. It is hoped that this depiction will assist universities to assess and benchmark their own performance.

Table 2
Categories of practice in case-study institutions

	Category X	Category Y	Category Z
Institutional policy	• Strategic institution-level policy on international students with corresponding action plan and dedicated resources • New money to support international student recruitment and admissions	• Some institution-level international student policies and goals, but little corresponding follow-through • Some targeted funding but international student initiatives subject to general budget cuts	• No institution-level international student policies or goals • International student initiatives subject to differential cuts to direct resources to other areas
General approach to recruitment	• Targeted strategy based on thorough analysis of institutional strengths, capacity and markets • Aggressive and proactive approach to create new markets • Trained staff to handle international recruitment • Recruitment pool generates new applicant pool	• Analysis of institutional strengths, capacity and market influences but does not define strategy • Proactive recruitment limited to regular attendance at international education fairs and missions • Recruitment handled by regular staff • Recruitment pool greater than applicant pool	• No consistent international student recruitment strategy • Little if any proactive recruitment outside general university recruitment policies • Recruitment pool equals applicant pool
Promotional material	• Professionally designed literature specifically developed for various international markets • Used in a variety of printed and electronic media	• Recruitment brochures specific for international student applicants • Reasonable quality, but generally not as good as domestic literature • Use of electronic and web media in progress or beginning	• Poor quality international student literature, e.g., variations on the material written for the domestic market • Uncoordinated approach
General approach to admissions	• Separate or priority administrative procedures for international students • High level of attention paid to credential assessment capability, whether done in-house or externally • Professionally trained, multilingual staff to handle international student enquiries, requests and concerns	• International students handled using same administrative procedures and staff as domestic students • Less attention paid to credential assessment as an issue • Possibly some special training and procedures to deal with specific international student issues	• International students handled the same way as domestic students or not as well • Foreign credentials, if unfamiliar, likely not assessed

	Category X	Category Y	Category Z
Admission processing and response time	• Quick • Rolling admission process with multiple entry points in many academic programs • Sensitivity to the academic calendar year in target countries	• Slow • May have rolling admission process with multiple entry points for some academic programs • Some sensitivity to the academic calendar year in target countries	• Slower • One admission point in the academic year
Admission materials	• High quality, providing all information needed by international student applicants	• Reasonable to poor quality, providing good information, but not well presented or coordinated	• Poorly presented and coordinated. International student literature little more than an add-on to general admission literature
Approach to tuition fees and funding	Good practice is where: - deliberate strategy is put in place based on a thorough analysis of funding circumstances, competitors' rates and targeted students' ability to pay - substantial financial support, often taken from differential fees collected, used to promote international student accessibility	• Differential fees applied to international students without much prior analysis of appropriate level • Some specific funding to offset differential fees but generally from same pool of resources as for domestic students	• Differential fees applied to international students • No special funding for international students and policies may actually restrict such funding (especially at graduate level)
On-site arrival	• Organized meet-and-greet program for all international students on arrival at airport • Special orientation programs	• Ad hoc meet-and-greet programs • Some organized orientation, mainly for international students on formal project and exchange programs	• Same as category Y • Often reliance on student organizations for special activities

	Category X	Category Y	Category Z
International student services	• International student support services fully organized and integrated with recruitment and admission offices • Fully staffed and trained international offices focused on delivery of top-quality service and support • Effort extends beyond students, e.g., training faculty and staff in cultural sensitivity • One-stop shopping	• International student support services generally not coordinated with recruitment and admission offices • International students on formal programs and projects supported and may extend services to all international students • Funding for international offices limited and subject to general budget cuts • Multi-stop shopping	• International student support services not coordinated with recruitment and admission offices • If it exists, the international office provides support and services for international students on formal programs and projects • Other support services are ad hoc and have few resources • Flea-market shopping
Housing	• Special accommodation arrangements for international students	• Some special accommodation arrangements	• No special accommodation arrangements
International student consultation	• On-site focus groups, special exit surveys and alumni follow-up	• Possible exit surveys (especially at graduate-student level) and alumni follow-up	• Alumni follow-up
Overall approach	• International students are considered good for the university academically and financially • They are a critical part of institutional growth strategy	• International students are considered good for the university, but put a strain on university services and funding • Institution wants and needs international students, but has dwindling resources to put into major recruitment activities or improvement of services	• International students are considered good for the university academically, but represent a net financial loss • Resources are needed in other areas that are more critical to institutional survival and potential growth

7. Implications for public policy

The third major research question for the study was to identify any implications for public policy with respect to international student recruitment. As the eight case study institutions were asked to focus particularly on the *challenges* to recruiting international students posed by current public policies, the comments below are not fully representative of the range of views and experiences of the case study institutions, many of which are quite positive overall.

7.1. Immigration policies

The case studies revealed a number of issues, the most significant of which relate to procedures of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Although considerable progress has been made as a result of continuing dialogue between the university sector and CIC, challenges still remain. These include:

- Ongoing problem with delays in the issuance of visas in some countries. The problem seems to be most acute in China, India and Pakistan.
- Inconsistent responses from various embassies and visa officers in the application of rules for granting student authorizations.
- Continued high rejection rates for student authorization applications in some countries compared with the average rate of refusal for all applications.
- A perceived lack of transparency and flexibility in the immigration process. In particular, there appears to be no appeal process and no explanation given for refusal of student visas.
- Concerns over procedures and delays in the issuance of spousal visas for students at the graduate level.
- The process of renewal of visas through the CIC office in Vegreville. Concerns were expressed over the inefficiency of this office and over the relationship between Vegreville and CIC offices in other cities. There was concern expressed by Quebec universities that CIC Vegreville did not seem to be as responsive as it could be to their special needs and issues.
- A special concern for Quebec institutions is the relation between CIC and the Government of Quebec over immigration procedures. In Quebec, all international students require a *certificat d'acceptation du Québec* (CAQ) and in some instances, there are discrepancies in the length of time for which a CAQ and a student visa are issued.
- Concern that existing policies relating to the issuance of work permits for international students are too rigid.

The case studies revealed the debate in the university community over the fact that international students who come to Canada on student visas sometimes apply for landed immigrant status. Opinion on this matter varies. Some argue that the process of changing from visa student to landed immigrant status should be made easier. At present, students have to leave the country to apply; almost all go to the United States for this purpose. Others argue that Canada should follow the example of countries, such as Australia, which does not allow students to apply as immigrants until after their course of studies is complete. Some see the individual right to choose as a fundamental human right and argue that the university has no role to play in encouraging or requiring students to return to their home country. Some make a distinction based on who is funding the student's study in Canada. If the student is self-funded, then a request for landed immigrant status should be facilitated; if the student is funded by their government, CIDA or

another international development agency as part of a development project, then Canada should not contribute to the brain drain.

7.2. Provincial government policies

A number of concerns were also expressed by interviewees over provincial policies relating to international students.

- The central issue is the situation regarding the regulation or deregulation of international student fees, which varies from province to province. It is clear that admission and recruitment strategies are strongly influenced by fee structures and funding formulas that affect both international competitiveness and the relative position of institutions both within and between provinces. Feedback from international students shows that cost is a factor in the choice of an institution, although value for money appears to be more significant than absolute cost.
- In addition to fees, a number of other provincial regulations directly affect the recruitment and admission of international students, e.g., the cost of health insurance where international students are not covered under provincial plans, such as in Ontario.
- In Quebec, concern was expressed over having to apply for a *certificat d'acceptation du Québec* (CAQ), which some felt was unnecessary. There was also concern about the operation of the scholarship quotas for the 47 francophone countries with which Quebec has special arrangements.
- Several provinces, such as Nova Scotia, Alberta and British Columbia, have set up structures to market international education. The degree of involvement of the university sector in these initiatives varies, although they are generally considered to be of value and worth exploring in other provinces.
- It is felt that provincial governments could better support university initiatives to recruit international students by increasing the availability of scholarship funds.
- It is felt that there is a need to further emphasize with provincial politicians the value of international students both in terms of enhanced quality of university programs and economic benefits for local communities.

7.3. Federal support

The policies of key federal departments are important to the international student marketplace.

- Concern was expressed that CIDA and the Academic Relations Division of DFAIT have reduced their support to scholarship programs, seriously weakening Canada's ability to attract high-quality international students.
- Industry Canada is becoming an increasingly important player in the marketing of educational services, of which international student recruitment is a part. A strategic plan has been developed for this sector, including the identification of priority target countries. University involvement in this process has been limited and there is room for much enhanced cooperation. Industry Canada is also developing plans for distance education initiatives in the international marketplace. Although much of the interaction is taking place with the private sector, several Canadian universities are major players in this field.

7.4. The Canadian Education Centre Network

The CEC Network is a major player in the recruitment of international students. All eight of the case study institutions subscribe to one or more of the CECs. Although it is recognized that considerable achievements have been made by the CEC Network despite its relatively new status, a number of concerns were expressed, including the following:

- The relatively high cost of CEC Network membership particularly when one includes the additional charges levied for extra services such as participation at fairs etc.
- The level and nature of the services provided by the CEC Network, which some interviewees believe to be too limited.
- The perceived lack of experience and seniority of CEC Network staff in some locations.
- The perceived lack of knowledge on the part of CEC Network staff of the nature and complexities of the Canadian university system, particularly with respect to graduate programs.
- The perceived need for the CEC Network to provide a greater degree of market intelligence and information on the educational systems of the countries in which centres are situated.
- The nature and implications of the relationship between Canadian missions and the CEC Network, particularly with respect to the issuance of visas and supporting universities' broader international initiatives.
- The CEC Network was perceived to take insufficient account of the particularities of Quebec universities.

8. Areas for further action

8.1. Self-evaluation by Canadian universities

The main purpose of this report is to provide Canadian universities with a benchmark against which to measure their approaches to the recruitment and admission of international students with a view to improving their performance. Therefore, we suggest that each institution examine this report and consider using the template presented in Appendix 4 to assess its practices in terms of its own circumstances. This could result in valuable specific plans for improvements. As several of the case-study institutions have explicitly recognized, no university can truly be world class without a much larger international student component as an integral part of a clearly articulated internationalization strategy.

8.2. Exploring partnerships

The case studies revealed a trend toward partnerships, and there is room for Canadian institutions to work together with other players to recruit and admit more international students. A major strength of Canadian universities is their independence, but this can also be a weakness. In reviewing their international strategy, each institution might pay special attention to the development of a cooperative, partnership approach as opposed to the prevalent model of institutional competition. These two approaches are not necessarily antithetical or mutually exclusive. The scope of possible partnerships should not be a narrow one, and could involve an increase in the use of university networks similar to those in Europe.

8.3. Advocacy

Case-study institutions urged that the results of this study be widely disseminated within Canadian universities and shared with key federal and provincial agencies. They also emphasized the need for AUCC, in cooperation with other key players at the national level, to advocate strongly

- Increased funding for international students through scholarship programs and increased support through the granting councils;
- Inclusion of universities as key actors in the federal government's strategy for the educational service sector;
- Improvements in immigration procedures for international students;
- A focus on promoting Canada as a destination of choice, and emphasis on the point that too great a focus on institutional competition may be detrimental and steps need to be taken to reduce this.

8.4. Continuing research

This study concentrated on the situation in Canada. Canadian institutions would also benefit from a comparative study of the international student recruitment and admission strategies and procedures of institutions based in Canada's main competitor countries, namely the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and France. A comparison of the immigration policies and procedures with respect to international students in these four countries would also be useful. It was suggested that AUCC might undertake this work.

9. Conclusion

Canadian universities have begun to recognize the importance of an effective strategy for the recruitment and admission of international students. The good practices highlighted in the report are indicative of a great number of positive changes taking place, both in terms of recruitment and admissions. Innovation, flexibility and responsiveness in dealing with international students, as well as an enhanced level of services and financial support are increasingly characteristic of universities' approaches.

At the same time, however, many challenges remain, particularly with respect to the issue of language competence and recruitment and admission at the graduate level, where a more decentralized institutional culture is prevalent and where ensuring a good match between the international graduate student and the faculty member who serves as the student's advisor is essential. Moreover, universities across the country are dealing with significant cuts to their human and financial resources — constraints that affect their capacity to make some of the changes necessary for a more competitive approach.

In these and other challenges identified in the study, Canadian institutions have much in common and much to gain from sharing information on how they are addressing the key issues involved in substantially increasing the number of international students on their campuses. This report was a first attempt to describe a rapidly changing situation and while it does not capture the full range of emerging practices in various institutions, particularly since the situation varies from province

to province, it is hoped that all Canadian universities can learn from the efforts and experiences that are reflected in the report and apply these lessons effectively to their own international student recruitment and admission policies and practices. This will be an important step toward a clearly articulated and coherent approach to international students — one that gives them the warmest welcome and the best experience possible.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Data on the numbers of international students in Canadian universities

Table 1
Student enrolment in Canadian universities 1993–97

		1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Canadian	Full-time	510,101	512,498	512,017	511,889	510,241
	Part-time	279,309	261,983	252,195	236,037	229,014
Landed immigrant	Full-time	34,401	35,600	35,770	36,048	36,433
	Part-time	15,342	15,463	14,992	14,111	14,179
Student visa	Full-time	29,818	27,615	25,407	25,698	26,425
	Part-time	5,633	5,811	6,028	5,985	6,480
Total	Full-time	574,320	575,713	573,194	573,635	573,099
	Part-time	300,284	283,257	273,215	256,133	249,673

Source: Statistics Canada

Table 2
Visa student enrolment in Canada, by province (1997)

	Nfld	PEI	NS	NB	Que	Ont	Man	Sask	Alta	BC	Can
Undergraduate:											
Full-time	135	56	1,047	456	5,754	4,395	465	458	1,104	1,430	15,300
Part-time	7	0	303	29	1,319	1,254	287	114	257	979	4,549
Total	142	56	1,450	485	7,073	5,649	752	572	1,361	2,409	19,849
Graduate:											
Full-time	247	14	290	167	3,974	3,226	275	326	929	1,677	11,125
Part-time	9	0	31	111	1,241	171	29	100	82	257	1,931
Total	256	14	321	78	5,215	3,397	304	426	1,011	1,934	13,056
Total visa students	398	70	1,771	663	12,288	9,046	1,056	998	2,372	4,343	32,905

Source: Statistics Canada

Appendix 2

International student feedback on university applications/admission procedures and other issues

Application procedures

Improvements are suggested in the following areas:

- Faster turnaround/response time to inquiries related to admission
- Faster turnaround time for approving/declining applications
- Immediate issuance of acceptance letter when student is accepted
- Quick assessments of advanced standing and credit for earlier work of students that transfer from other countries or into Canadian institutions
- Acceptance of overseas qualifications/granting of advanced credit standing
- Having a designated international admissions officer
- Improving methods of communication between the student and university(i.e. responding via E-mail or fax when possible)
- Having flexible application deadlines that coincide with international school years so students are able to submit transcripts more readily
- Having application forms designed specifically for international students and graduate studies
- Including information on deadlines for international student applications when responding to requests for information
- Having specific instructions for sending international fees, i.e., type of currency required, form of payment, i.e., money order, deposit to bank account, credit cards, etc.
- Clearly stating refund policies for issues related to tuition fees deposits, etc.
- Extending application and document deadlines to the end of June
- Ensuring that acceptance letters have correct name and other important details as well as full information on scholarships, teaching assistant opportunities or bursaries so that students do not encounter difficulty when applying for student authorizations
- When applicable, automatically sending CAQ application forms upon acceptance of a student

Issues relating to acceptance of international students

Improvements are suggested in the following areas:

- Accepting lower TOEFL scores
- Accepting other English test scores or considering a student's level of English proficiency rather than test scores
- Considering conditional acceptance provided the student fulfills the language requirements before completing the program
- Accepting lower GRE and GMAT scores, as many students do not have English as a first language, or considering work experience and education as alternatives to these scores
- Accepting photocopies of official transcripts and other documents that are certified by the respective country, CEC or Commissioner of Oaths

- Accepting students conditionally on the basis of forecasted marks as exam results are often released months after they occur
- Accepting more university transfer students

Promotional/information materials

Improvements are suggested in the following areas:

- Producing user-friendly material for international students that clearly indicates such information as deadlines for application and supporting documents, fee structure, etc.
- Ensuring consistency of information in print and electronic (i.e., web site) forms
- Customizing program application material for international students
- Examples of information that should be contained in information leaflets for Bachelor programs include test scores required (TOEFL, GRE, GMAT, etc.) for each program
- the cost of study, including all costs with examples of costs for average course load (including international fees) since each university has a different credit system which can be complicated
- deadlines for application for each program and any deadlines for scholarships for which international students may be eligible
- residence information, if only to provide a reference for where students can obtain more information or a web page address
- financial assistance available, including information about teaching assistant opportunities. All universities should clearly state whether they provide financial assistance for international students and at what level of study
- The information listed in the previous point should also be available on the Internet. It is suggested that universities have separate pages on their web sites just for international students

Source: CEC Network 1998.

Appendix 3

Provincial policies affecting international students in Canada[1]

1. Tuition fees

British Columbia

- Universities administer and set differential fee rates for international students, and retain the revenues these fees generate. The province has established the following conditions for the enrollment of international students in its colleges and institutes. Although universities establish their own fee policies, the following guidelines are generally accepted:

  - The tuition fees for international students will be set by the institutions at a level that covers direct costs and overhead;
  - No international students shall displace a qualified citizen or permanent resident from British Columbia or from other parts of Canada from a space within the provincially funded profile for that program for the institution;
  - International student numbers will be excluded from the institutions' full-time equivalents (FTE) count in calculating the formula allocation;

- The following categories of students are exempted from the tuition fee differential in British Columbia colleges and institutes. Although universities establish their own policies in this area, these guidelines are generally accepted:

  - Foreign live-in caregivers with valid employment authorizations;
  - Diplomatic and consular officials and their dependents, or any other official representatives of a country other that Canada, or of any inter-governmental organization in which Canada participates;
  - Any person in Canada recognized as a Convention Refugee;
  - Students on an international exchange, scholarship, or fellowship agreement where there is joint approval of the receiving institution and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology;
  - Dependents of Canadian citizens or permanent residents;
  - People with employment authorization;
  - At the discretion of the institution, an individual who is in Canada, who has applied for Permanent Resident/Landed Immigrant Status and who can provide evidence of the "letter of approval in principle" to the institution for admission purposes, may be eligible.

[1] As of November 1998

Alberta

- Alberta requires that international students pay a minimum surcharge of 100% of the applicable fee charged to Canadian students. Any surcharge above this amount is at the discretion of each individual institution. Institutions retain the revenues gained from differential fees.
- There are no provincial exemptions from international student differential fees.

Saskatchewan

- Saskatchewan has no specific policy related to tuition fees for international students. The province recommends, however, that fees are in line with those of neighbouring provinces. Universities administer and set differential fee rates for international students, and keep the revenues generated.
- There are no provincial exemptions from international student differential fees.

Manitoba

- Manitoba requires international undergraduate students to pay 175% of what Canadian students are charged. Institutions retain the revenues gained from differential fees.
- International graduate students are exempted from this differential. There are no other provincial exemptions.
- The Council on Post-Secondary Education (COPSE) is currently reviewing policies in this area.

Ontario

- Ontario universities administer and set differential fee rates for international students, and retain the revenues these fees generate (nevertheless, students who were charged lower rates before the province deregulated its tuition fee policy have the right to pay these same rates until the end of their program).
- The following categories of people are exempt from differential fee requirements:
  - Dependents of Canadian citizens or permanent residents;
  - Persons and their dependents who have been recognized as a Convention Refugee within the meaning of the Immigration Act;
  - Diplomatic and consular officials and their dependents;
  - Persons or dependents of persons who are admitted to and remain in Canada for the purposes of employment (other than graduate teaching and research assistantships);
  - Participants in an Ontario government sponsored exchange agreement.

Quebec

- Quebec's consent is required to admit any international student to the province, except a student chosen under a Canadian government assistance program for developing countries. Applicants must be in possession of a *Certificat d'Acceptation du Québec* (CAQ) before being eligible for a student authorization.
- Quebec requires universities to levy a differential fee for international students. The differential must be remitted to the province.
- Some students from countries that have signed a tuition fee agreement with Quebec may be exempted from differential tuition fees. Signing countries include: Algeria, Argentina, Benin,

Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Colombia, Comoro Islands, Congo, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ecuador, Gabon, Germany, Greenland, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Korea, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Niger, Panama, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, Tunisia, Uruguay, Venezuela, Vietnam, and Zaire. Students from these countries must apply to government authorities (usually the Ministry of Education) in their home countries at the time of application.

- The following categories of international students are also exempted from differential tuition fees:

  - Citizens of France;
  - Diplomatic and consular officials and their dependents;
  - Persons and their dependents who have been recognized as a Convention Refugee within the meaning of the Immigration Act;
  - Students in programs such as French Language & Literature, French Canadian Studies or Teaching French as a Second Language, at either the undergraduate or graduate level;
  - Students whose spouse, or unmarried students whose parent, holds a Temporary Work Permit valid for a position in Quebec. The exemption will last as long as the Permit is valid;
  - Students receiving support from the African Development Bank, the United Nations Population Fund, and the *Conférence des ministres de la Jeunesse et des Sports des pays francophones*.

New Brunswick

- Under traditional funding arrangements, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) deducted $1,700 per full-time equivalent international student from university operating grants with the expectation that the institutions will have collected this amount through differential fees for international students. According to a new funding formula, New Brunswick universities are now free to administer and set differential fee rates for international students, and keep the revenues these generate.
- MPHEC no longer adjusts operating grants based on international student enrollment. Since September of the 1998-99 academic year, international undergraduate students have been excluded from the university funding formula. International students pursuing graduate and post-graduate studies, however, continue to receive funding at the same level as Canadian students.
- There are no provincial exemptions from international student differential fees; however MPHEC recommends that universities in the Maritime provinces continue to follow its exemption policy, outlined below.

Nova Scotia

- Under traditional funding arrangements, MPHEC deducted $1,700 per full-time equivalent international student from university operating grants with the expectation that the institutions will have collected this amount through differential fees for international students. According to a new funding formula, Nova Scotia universities are now free to administer and set differential fee rates, and keep the revenues these generate.

- MPHEC no longer adjusts operating grants based on international student enrollment. Public funding is provided for international students at the same level as for Canadian students. However, the province will only fund 10% of an institution's corridor enrollment at the undergraduate level, and 30% at the graduate level. If these limits are exceeded, no additional funding will be given. (These limits are applied at the level of the institution, not the discipline/programme, however the Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education [NSCHE] reserves the right to review enrollment in individual programs if the international graduate enrollment exceeds 50%.)
- There are no provincial exemptions from international student differential fees, however MPHEC recommends that universities in the maritime provinces continue to follow its exemption policy, outlined below.

Newfoundland

- Memorial University is free to administer and set differential fee rates for international students, and keep the revenues these fees generate.
- There are no provincial exemptions from international student differential fees.(However, Memorial University exempts international graduate students from paying differential fees.)

Prince Edward Island

- Under traditional funding arrangements, MPHEC deducted $1,700 per full-time equivalent international student from university operating grants with the expectation that the institutions will have collected this amount through differential fees for international students. According to a new funding formula, the University of PEI is free to administer and set differential fee rates for international students, and keep the revenues generated.
- There are no provincial exemptions from international student differential fees, however MPHEC recommends that universities in the maritime provinces continue to follow its exemption policy, outlined below.

2. Health insurance

The following provinces extend public health insurance benefits to international students. Details are provided for each.

British Columbia

All international students who will be in British Columbia for six months or longer are required to enrol themselves and their dependents in the BC Medical Services Plan. The student must have a valid student authorization issued for six or more months (cost is $36/month for one person).

Alberta

To be eligible for Alberta Health Care, international students must have a student authorization and be able to demonstrate that they are admitted to a study program for 12 months or more. They must register within 3 months of arrival in Alberta. Dependants residing in Canada may also be covered, but they must have documents to show that they will be here for at least 12 months (cost is $34/month for one person).

Saskatchewan

International Students receive full health care benefits, like any Canadian citizen, from the Saskatchewan Health Services at no cost, for the duration of their student authorization. Students may register upon arrival.

The following provinces do not cover international students under provincial health care plans. International students must arrange for medical coverage through other providers. Particular details are given for each province where applicable:

Manitoba

Ontario

Ontario Universities have arranged an insurance plan, the University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP), that provides international students and their eligible family members with comparable protection to what they would have received under the government of Ontario plan. UHIP is compulsory for all international students in Ontario, unless they can prove that they have coverage under a provincially-sponsored health plan or one of the following plans: Canadian International Development Agency Health Care Plan; Canadian Bureau for International Education Health Care Plan; Canadian Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan.

Quebec

As a result of inter-governmental agreements, students from France, Denmark, Finland, Luxemburg, Portugal, Norway, and Sweden that were covered by their respective social security systems before their arrival in Quebec are eligible for coverage under Quebec`s health insurance plan. In addition, students working on campus are also eligible for coverage under Quebec`s health insurance plan.

New Brunswick

Nova Scotia

Newfoundland

Prince Edward Island

International students with work permits are covered.

3. Provincial bursaries and financial assistance

- Except for Ontario and Quebec, people entering Canada on a visitor's visa with student authorization are generally not eligible for provincial government sponsored student loans, scholarships or other forms of social assistance.

- Ontario reserves 60 of its Ontario Graduate Scholarships (OGS) for international students with high academic standing. Students must have been accepted by an Ontario degree-granting institution and have obtained a valid student authorization.

- Quebec offers 100 bursaries (Bourses d'excellence) to various countries through the *Ministère de l'éducation* for master's, doctoral or post-doctoral study at Quebec universities. The bursaries are intended to help particularly meritorious students who are pursuing advanced studies in programs corresponding to the development priorities of their home countries, and/or strategic sectors for both developing and industrialized countries. Candidates should contact the national ministry of education in their home country with regard to the availability of bursaries and the application procedure.

Employment regulations affecting international students

Employment is under federal jurisdiction. Federal government regulations allow full-time international students to work in Canada under the following conditions:

- The work takes place on campus (the employer can be the institution, faculty, student organization or private contractor providing services to the institution).
- Employment is part of their course of study, such as a work term during the year;
- The student is a graduate assistant working at an institution which is not affiliated with the institution at which he/she is enrolled on a full-time basis;
- The student is sponsored by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the employment is part of the program arranged by CIDA;
- The student, through no fault of his/her own, has been cut off from finances upon which he/she was dependent for day-to-day expenses;
- The student has graduated and wishes to work in a study-related job for up to one year;

In all but the last circumstance, it is necessary to obtain an employment authorization from CIC before beginning employment. Under certain circumstances, students can work outside the campus when an employer can show that no Canadian citizen is available to fill the position.

Spouses of students are permitted to work in Canada during the time their partner is a student. Spouses may obtain an employment authorization which permits them to work off campus. CIC currently charges a $150 fee for employment authorizations which are valid for only one year. Employment income is subject to Canadian income tax.

In the case where a student is permitted to remain in Canada for one year after graduation to work in his/her field of studies, a job offer must be issued within 60 days of completing the requirements for a degree. Employment authorizations will only be issued with an offer of employment, and the employment must be limited to work related to the student's education. Students are entitled to work anywhere in Canada.

Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission Foreign Student Tuition Fee Supplement Policy, November 1990

Institutions are encouraged **not** to levy differential fee rates for the following students:

a. A Canadian Citizen
b. A Permanent resident
c. A visitor who entered Canada as a diplomat or consular officer; as a properly accredited representative of another country, or of the United Nations; as a member of staff of any of the above; or as a member of a foreign military force.
d. A visitor who received entrance approval for the purpose of employment
e. A person who is sponsored and financially assisted by one of the following:
   - the Canadian International Development Agency
   - the International Development Research Centre
   - the International Centre for Ocean Development
   - the World Bank
   - the Inter-American Development Bank
   - the Asian Development Bank
   - the Caribbean Development Bank
   - the African Development Bank, and
   - any program of financial assistance to students under an aid program of the United Nations or one of its agencies, provided such a program is recognized and assisted, directly or indirectly, by the Government of Canada. Qualifying programs include: Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships, NRC Associateships, CIDA bilateral traineeships and any sponsoring programs of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the World Health Organization.
f. A person who is receiving full financial support from a registered international charitable foundation whose aid program is primarily aimed at low-income developing countries. Such foundations include national church organizations and the Rotary Club International.
g. A spouse or dependant of any of the above. A person who is a spouse or dependant of a Canadian Citizen or permanent resident must show proof of their dependant status being established a minimum of three years prior to the application for exemption.
h. A person who is studying in Canada under a cultural exchange agreement between the Government of Canada or one of the provincial governments of the Maritime Provinces and the government of another country provided that the number of places made available in Maritime institutions normally equals the number of places made available to Maritime residents on the other country.
i. Same as in item (h) except the exchange agreement is between an institution in the Maritimes and an institution in another country.
j. Medical interns and residents.
k. Foreign students enrolled in programme majors not funded by the Commission.
l. Foreign graduate students who are ineligible for funding because they have exceeded the maximum length of study allowed for funding purposes.

Appendix 4
A self-evaluation template

The following self-evaluation template is provided to help Canadian universities assess their current international student recruitment and admission policies and procedures and make any necessary adjustments. It includes detailed questions on eight major categories of issues that emerged from the case-study research as central to the recruitment, admission and retention of international students.

Although each institution will have to examine its recruitment and admission policies and practices in light of its own particular circumstances, ensuring that these key issues are addressed will be an important step toward a clearly articulated and coherent institutional approach to international students.

Strategic and financial issues

- ***What is the university's policy on the recruitment and admission of international students?***
  - The answer to this question should go beyond the general statement that all students are welcome. Evidence from the case studies has shown that a clearly articulated policy can be very helpful. The lack of such a policy can create confusion.

- ***Does the university have a clearly articulated internationalization strategy and how does the recruitment and admission of international students fit into that strategy?***
  - An internationalization strategy approved by the senate is advantageous. The recruitment of international students is a necessary but not sufficient part of an internationalization strategy.

- ***What is the university's policy on the financial issues involved? Is this to be at full cost recovery, at cost recovery plus profit or at reduced fees? How is the income generated by international student fees to be distributed and where are the resources to support international student recruitment and admission to be found? Are international students mainly regarded as generators of revenue or are they truly a valuable academic asset or a combination of both?***
  - Additional investment of resources is required if recruitment and admission procedures are to be improved. One source of revenue is from student fees, and a number of case-study institutions are using this means to raise the income required. Others are redistributing resources from existing revenues and/or raising monies from outside sources. Some have decided not to make any additional investments.

- ***Is there a clear plan and target figure for admission of international students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels on a faculty by faculty or department by department level?***
  - A targeted approach is more effective and can help maximize the utilization of scare resources.

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- ***Graduate students make up 40% of the international students currently enrolled in Canadian universities but faculties of graduate studies are rarely central players in the existing plans and procedures for the recruitment and admission of international students. Is this appropriate? If not, how can this be changed?***
  - Some coordination at the graduate level would enhance the recruitment and admission efforts.

- ***How can scholarship funds to support international students be generated?***
  - The existence of such support is important in attracting students especially at the graduate level.

- ***What are the possibilities for taking the university to the international student rather than bringing the student to the university?***
  - Twinning arrangements, short courses, off-shore programs and distance education programs may have a role. These are potential areas for expansion that can be self-financing and where there is a growing market for Canadian expertise.

Administrative structures

- ***How can existing administrative structures be adjusted or new structures established to facilitate the recruitment and admission of international students?***
  - Adjustments in existing administrative structures can help in recruitment and admissions: a "one-stop shopping" approach for international students is particularly effective. The most effective approach involve creating a team of the major administrative players involved in the recruitment and admissions process. This often involves the adjustment of existing administrative structures to reduce duplication of effort and mitigate problems of "territoriality" between different offices and major players. Recruitment, admission and registrarial services must cooperate and the finance office is also an important player. Where there are tensions between different players over the ownership of particular administrative functions, recruitment and admissions of international students are adversely affected. The question of how mechanisms and procedures can be established to achieve this cooperation is an important one.

Recruitment issues

- ***Are existing recruitment strategies effective?***
  - The effectiveness of current recruitment strategies needs to be critically examined and a starting point is an analysis of the success of different approaches. Best practices include ...a quantitative analysis of the impact of different recruitment strategies, but few institutions are effectively analyzing the relative impact of existing strategies.

- ***Is the promotional material appropriate and effective?***
  - Promotional material must be analyzed from the point of view of its appropriateness and effectiveness. The best approaches are those that take into account cultural specificity of individual markets including language issues.

- ***Are such approaches as targeted marketing, recruitment agents or special agreements with foreign government agencies being used, and what are the costs and benefits of such approaches?***
  - Innovative recruitment strategies include marketing directed at international agencies and governments. These are new recruitment strategies for many institutions and their costs and benefits need to be considered.

- ***What are the possibilities of co-marketing with other players including the private sector?***
  - Some co-marketing with other universities, provincial and federal governments and the private sector is occurring. Although universities are often competing for international students there are advantages to selective co-marketing that can be mutually beneficial and must be considered.

Admission requirements and procedures

The case-study evidence shows that a number of institutions are re-examining their admission requirements. Language competence is a major issue but there are others such as how SAT scores are to be treated for U.S. students and how to treat high school grades and subjects from other systems. Some institutions are following the approach that, if students meet the admission requirements for university entrance in their home countries, then they are acceptable in Canada but this is the exception rather than the rule. Existing admission standards are often a barrier to the acceptance of high-quality students because they fail to take into account differences between Canada and other systems. Admission standards need to be re-examined.

- ***Should language competence be an admission requirement or a program requirement? Is the existing emphasis on language testing leading to a competence in passing tests rather than a competence in the academic language skills required to successfully complete a program?***
  - Language competence is an issue that is currently undergoing a serious re-evaluation.

- ***Are admissions and registrars' offices putting too much emphasis on the "gatekeeping" function at the expense of facilitating the admissions process?***
  - The best practices are those where increased flexibility is used in dealing with international student admissions. Institutions need to carefully consider this issue.

- ***Is the response time to student applications relatively short? How can the admissions process for international students be speeded up?***
  - This is especially problematic at the graduate level. New "fast track" procedures are being introduced at several case-study institutions: the use of on-line electronic applications and electronic monitoring of where an application is in the administrative process. These need to be considered by each institution.

- ***The knowledge base required to understand the academic standards in other systems is important and the best practices are those where this knowledge base is present. Institutions need to consider how their existing situation can be improved. What additional training and resources are required?***
  - Here the increased use of the CICIC could be helpful.

- ***Are original transcripts required or are certified photocopies acceptable? As the introduction of electronic applications expands, how is documentation to be validated? Are faxed documents acceptable?***
  - A number of case-study institutions are re-examining their admissions procedures to determine the appropriate nature and form of the documentation required. Again, each institution needs to consider these issues bearing in mind the need to guard against dishonesty on the part of the applicants.

Student services

The case-study evidence shows that there is a strong relation between international student recruitment and retention and the level and quality of the services they receive and each institution needs to take a careful look at students services issues. Questions include:

- ***How are adequate services for international students to be created and financed?***

- ***How can the various aspects of students services including housing, health, cultural adaptation, personal counseling, religion, etc., be more effectively coordinated?***

- ***How can academic counseling at the undergraduate level and graduate supervision at the postgraduate level be improved and coordinated with the student services provided through offices such as those of the international student advisor?***

- ***How can the problems created by different levels of service for international students emerging on campuses as a result of special programs be addressed?***

- ***How are retention and performance monitored and issues addressed? Are these statistics used effectively to demonstrate quality?***

Partnerships

The case-study evidence shows that the best practices involve the creation of partnerships, and institutions need to consider these. Partnerships can result in a "win–win" scenario even in competitive situations. Some key questions include:

- ***How can more effective partnerships with other players involved in international activities be established?***
  - These include other Canadian universities, universities overseas, provincial governments, the federal government, foreign governments, international agencies, NGOs and the local community.

- ***How can exchange agreements and agreements for academic cooperation be more effectively integrated with initiatives for the recruitment of international students?***
  - At the moment there is limited articulation in this respect. Special opportunities exist at the graduate level and institutions that create effective agreements for academic cooperation reap considerable benefits.

- ***How can partnerships with the private sector be established?***
  - The private sector is increasingly important in the educational services market.

Faculty, staff, student, alumni and community involvement

The case-study evidence shows that this is a key issue for success. Some key questions include:

- ***How can faculty resources be used more effectively in the recruitment and admission of international students? If offshore programs are involved in the institution's approach, what arrangements and possible adjustments to existing collective agreements need to be made? Is there a special role for early retirees and young post-docs?***

- ***How can administrative staff resources be used more effectively in the recruitment and admission process?***

- ***How can Canadian students as well as international students be more effectively involved?***

- ***How can alumni be more effectively involved?***

- ***How can the local community be more effectively involved?***

- ***How can cultural awareness and sensitivity of students, faculty and staff be improved? What training programs can be put in place to facilitate this? Should the orientation of international students be complemented with orientation programs for Canadian students, faculty and staff?***

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Curriculum

Curricular change is an integral part of attracting international students and several case-study institutions have made innovative changes in this respect. Some questions that need to be posed are:

- ***Are the programs being marketed the most appropriate ones for the emerging global marketplace and what changes or adjustments are required?***

- ***Are the existing methods of program delivery the most effective ones and how can these be modified? How can the academic contribution of international students to the enrichment of the learning environment be more effectively integrated into academic programs?***

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In addition to the sources quoted here, each of the eight case-study institutions provided extensive documentation that was used in compiling this report. In addition, a number of other institutions supplied surveys of international students and related documents of relevance to the research objectives. These have not been cited to protect the identity of the participating institutions.

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